

In Search of U.S. Grand Strategy:

National Security Strategy
since
Goldwater-Nichols

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CHAPTER ONE

The Birth of Modern Presidential Doctrine: “National Security Strategy”

Since the ratification of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, or the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, American presidents have been required to submit to Congress an annual report outlining the national security strategy the Commander in Chief will pursue while in office. To be sure, the idea of a nation’s leader making public his security strategy - - a plan of action crafted to achieve a specific security goal - - is not unique. Informal doctrines and strategies have been made public even earlier than Pericles’ in the Peloponnesian War. However, that a branch of a nation’s government would officially require a formal outline of this national security strategy seems to be a distinctly American invention. In fact, the actual requirement for the president to report his national security strategy (NSS) to Congress arose only as an amendment to the Goldwater-Nichols Act (GNA) added during the Senate Armed Services Committee’s markup of the bill. The heart of GNA, then, is not this reporting requirement.

Accordingly, the effect of the GNA amendment requiring a publishable NSS is also less significant than the remainder of GNA’s reforms. But because national strategic doctrine is translated into both the national military strategy as well as domestic and foreign policy initiatives, a study of these NSS’s is important. Fritz Ermarth has defined strategic doctrine as “a set of operative beliefs, values and assertions that in a significant way guide official behavior with respect to strategic research and development, weapons choice, forces, operational plans, arms control, etc.”¹ If this definition is accurate, then studying these NSS reports can impart important insights into a particular president’s

¹ Huntington, Samuel. *The Strategic Imperative. “The Renewal of Strategy.”* Center for International Affairs. Harvard University. Ballinger Press. 1982. pg 55.

strategic thinking as well as providing reliable predictive indicators for executive-level action. Of course, this assumes that presidents actually abide by the NSS's they have issued, an assumption which will be examined in this study.

Aaron Friedberg noted in 1982 that “by any reasonable definition of the word, this country has never *had* a strategic nuclear doctrine. Or, perhaps more precisely, the United States has had a strategic doctrine in the same way that a schizophrenic has a personality. Instead of a single integrated and integrating set of ideas, values, and beliefs, we have had a complex and sometimes contradictory *mélange* of notions, principles, and policies.”² At the time, this perception was becoming increasingly evident as a general problem in U.S. strategic thinking to members of Congress, among them John Warner and G. William Whitehurst.³ These Congressmen would be the eventual sponsors of the NSS reporting amendment. Indeed, the reasons they provided for the amendment to GNA correspond directly to Friedberg’s classification of U.S. nuclear strategy as schizophrenic. Warner’s and Whitehurst’s amendment was of course influenced by James Locher’s comprehensive assessment of deficiencies within the defense establishment which came several years earlier. Indeed, Locher’s report became the basis for much of GNA’s content.

The inclusion of the NSS reporting amendment seems to indicate that the Congressmen responsible for drafting GNA took seriously the amendment’s intended goal. Specifically, the goal is outlined in the amendment’s subsections. Generally, as will be examined in greater detail later, the amendment sought to enhance the effectiveness of the Defense Department’s strategic planning. By requiring a NSS report

² Friedberg, Aaron. *The Strategic Imperative*. “The Evolution of U.S. Strategic Doctrine.” Center for International Affairs. Harvard University. Ballinger Press: 1982. pg 56

³ Locher, James. Private Interview with Matthew Baldwin. 02-19-03, 02-28-03, 03-28-03

(NSSR) that was focused in terms of identifiable goals, coherent in terms of relating means to ends, integrated in terms of resource allocation, and set within the context of a specific time horizon, Congress hoped to eliminate strategic inefficiency and error.⁴

The major focus of this study will examine whether or not U.S. presidents since GNA's enactment have abided by the specific requirements of the NSSR amendment. Additionally, if it is conceded that the NSSR amendment was passed by Congress to guarantee more effective NSS, an interesting insight becomes evident. That is, GNA might be seen as an instance of a Congressional check on executive power. To ascertain whether this is an accurate characterization, this study will examine the text of each president's NSSR's. By comparison to the GNA's reporting requirements as well as amongst successive presidents' doctrines, this study will attempt to pinpoint an additional component in the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government. Finally, this study will examine to what extent these NSS's have remained relevant, and, if any, which features of NSS have been common to all presidents' NSSR's.

The importance of the GNA amendment for an NSSR from the president should not be underestimated. In passing the amendment, Congress meant to send a clear signal to the Commander in Chief that effective strategic planning was a responsibility requiring careful craftsmanship. There is no doubt that the specter of additional, embarrassing military operations failures was foremost among their concerns. Congress was also

⁴ The criteria for the NSSR in the GNA amendment have been reduced to these elements by Don Snider in "The National Security Strategy: Documenting Strategic Vision." Strategic Studies Institute. 1995. John Lewis Gaddis, further simplifies these divisions in "A Grand Strategy of Transformation," *Foreign Policy*. Nov/Dec 2003. pg. 54.

concerned that NSS's of the past had not been properly integrated, having witnessed the prevalence of schizophrenic NSS time and time again, from president to president.

The prescription Congress issued, then, was a set of demanding reporting requirements for each president's NSS. In this sense, the requirement for a formal declaration of NSS required that the president would be able to be held precisely accountable for his plans of action - - lest, as trends since the early 1970's suggest, Congress take action to terminate or limit U.S. military action abroad.⁵ The reporting amendment also enhances congressional oversight: "links have been established between congressional staff members and relevant officials in the Pentagon and the armed services through which important pieces of information and influence might be channeled in both directions."⁶ Thus, the mutual relationship between staffers and defense officials allows the amendment to provide a more indirect check on the implementation of national security strategy - - especially with respect to defense appropriations.⁷

On the other hand, it may be contended that a president's NSSR has become little more than a token preview of what policies he will pursue while in office. In such a case, the NSSR is crafted in such broad language that it nullifies GNA's reporting rubric. It might seem then that the Congressional action to reduce schizophrenic presidential policy actually resulted in a more neutral, comatose policy preview. This seems to be at least partially in tune with the kinds of disappointment expressed by Congressmen responsible for drafting GNA. As Senator Strom Thurmond noted in 1994, "the [. . .] report has seldom met the expectations of those of us who participated in passing the Goldwater-

⁵ Feld, Werner and Wildgen, John. Congress and National Defense: The Politics of the Unthinkable. Praeger Publishing. 1985. pg. 31

⁶ Ibid. pg. 34

⁷ President Reagan's NSSR in Chapter Three provides a detailed illustration of this sometimes adversarial relationship between a president's NSS and the willingness of Congress to implement that strategy.

Nichols Act.”⁸ However, Thurmond did in fact qualify his statement by characterizing this poor presidential behavior as “seldom.”

Through specific analysis of each president’s NSSR’s, this study will seek to provide a more concrete characterization of Thurmond’s statement. That is, it will be determined which presidents have in fact met GNA’s specific rubric of reporting requirements. More importantly, though, it will be determined whether or not the GNA reporting requirement has in fact been important: has it been a viable tool for preventing schizophrenic policy, or has it been a nominal sign of neutral, comatose policy prescriptions?

It should be noted that what is formalized into each president’s NSSR usually follows from a process which generally begins when a current president begins to make broad suggestions for changes to the previous president’s strategic doctrine. These suggestions follow from a variety of formats: campaign speeches, televised debates, press conferences, State of the Union addresses, and eventually culminate in the explicit presidential statement of “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America.” The variety of these formats, the increasing importance of televised addresses, and the contemporary explosion of presidential duties has resulted in the creation of a more complex presidential support system. This essentially means that the president will employ professional speechwriters as well as an increasingly great number of advisers. The NSSR as a final product is then referred to as “presidential doctrine” or the respective Administration’s national security strategy. It is the product of the competing recommendations of a specialized group of advisers, with the “winning” recommendations later included and endorsed publicly by the respective president.

⁸ Gaddis, John Lewis. “A Grand Strategy of Transformation,” *Foreign Policy*. Nov/Dec 2003. pg. 53

The specific content of the NSSR's, then, varies according to the particular president's set of beliefs as well as the guidance he receives from his advisers regarding effective foreign policy making. President W. Bush's NSSR is noteworthy in its rejection of previous presidents' assumptions regarding the efficacy of containment and deterrence. The evidence in the wake of the September 11th, 2001, terrorist attacks on the U.S. was clear. The message, too, seemed clear: had a policy of preemption existed before September 11th, 2001, such a loss might have been prevented. The corresponding change in doctrinal policy thus became clear: "As a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed [. . .] In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action."⁹ This statement reveals the Bush Administration's awareness of the necessary shift in foreign policy strategy, identifies this shift in policy as requiring preemption, and sets the policy change in the context of a historical test which shows the previous assumptions have failed. Interestingly enough, critics of the current Bush Administration's NSS have pointed out the particular potency of the beliefs of a president's advisers. That is, the current Bush NSS is based upon the same strategic principles outlined in 1992 by Paul Wolfowitz's classified *Defense Planning Guidance*; now Deputy Secretary of Defense for President W. Bush, the reappearance of these guidelines is a testament to the influence of a president's advisers.¹⁰

The need to codify the presidential doctrine is understandable. Besides setting the tone for administrative policies and providing a general strategic architecture, the doctrine becomes a reference point from which the respective president can be later

⁹ Bush, George W. "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America." 17 September, 2002.

¹⁰ <http://www.pbs.org> Frontline Special on Iraq: "The War Behind Closed Doors."

judged. For President Truman, though he was not bound by the formal requirements of GNA, a retrospective judgment of his “presidential worth” often follows from a discussion of his landmark policies of Soviet containment - - his presidential doctrine. President Clinton, bound by GNA, was no exception.

President Clinton’s doctrine followed after a thorough period of experimentation with terms that could encapsulate the principles featured in his election campaign. As Douglas Brinkley has documented, the process that began after Clinton’s first months in office could only be described as incoherent or “elastic”; Anthony Lake, Clinton’s national security adviser, explicitly asked the National Security Council staff to rectify this problem by drafting a “grand strategy” for the president.¹¹ That such terminology is common within the ranks of senior political advisers lends further credence to the notion that presidential doctrine is the product of both a president’s and his advisers’ strategic visions. Scholars such as Alexander George have also suggested that this “multiple advocacy” by presidential advisers in fact improves the quality of information the president receives, resulting in range of options that is correspondingly better than in the absence of such multiple advocacy.¹²

Indeed, it seems President Clinton was fully aware that “a larger vision would be needed if he was to enter the ranks of the great presidents.”¹³ Historian John Gaddis points to this point in his recent survey of grand strategy in presidential doctrines: “[all grand strategies] have one thing in common: they prepare the way for new grand

¹¹ Brinkley, Douglas. “Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine.” *Foreign Policy*. Nov/Dec 2000. pg. 115

¹² George, Alexander. *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy*. Westview Press: 1980. pg. 148

¹³ *Ibid.* pg. 114.

strategies by showing that old ones have failed.”¹⁴ But though some presidents have issued historically famous doctrines, these have usually been the exceptions rather than the rule. However, since GNA was enacted, it has been commonplace to refer to particular president’s doctrines - - it has become the legal rule.

However, as Aaron Friedberg qualifies, in general, “a more unified strategic doctrine will have to be more openly traditional in direction and tone. It should be clear by now that the necessary changes really involve a shift in emphasis more than they do a dramatic intellectual counterrevolution in which all modern concepts are banished to the garbage heap of history.”¹⁵ Friedberg suggests, then, that changes in NSS from one president to the next are generally limited. But the NSSR’s of President Clinton and President George W. Bush seem to depart from this trend.

The NSS of a respective president is thus clearly subject to change in the wake of unanticipated events. It seems obvious that, had President Bush issued his NSSR before September 11th, 2001, he would have not subscribed to a strategy of preemption. More importantly, he would have then radically shifted the direction of his NSS to meet the new demands which perhaps justified the introduction of a new strategy of preemption. The efficacy of the NSSR as a predictive indicator of foreign policy depends on the president’s willingness to follow the outlined prescriptions. With a few possible exceptions, the best strategic outline is meaningless if it is not abided.¹⁶

In a more general and accountable sense, one refers to such a product as an individual president’s doctrine because, by advocating its principles publicly and

¹⁴ Gaddis, John Lewis. *Foreign Policy*. “A Grand Strategy of Transformation.” *Foreign Policy*. November/December, 2002. pg. 53

¹⁵ Friedberg, Aaron. “The Evolution of U.S. Strategic Doctrine.” *The Strategic Imperative*. Pg. 92.

¹⁶ A brief outline of the power of President Reagan’s words alone is featured in Norman Podhoretz, “In Praise of the Bush Doctrine.” *Commentary*. Sept. 2002, Vol. 114, Issue Two.

deciding how to effect its corresponding policies within the privacy of his Administration, he assumes political responsibility for all its potential policy outcomes. For better or for worse, the president assumes its sole authorship. Indeed, since President Clinton, it has been customary for the president to now include a brief one or two-page signed letter as the opening of the NSSR. This letter often outlines the main principles which are expounded upon in the NSSR while at the same time accentuating its author's responsibility.

The importance of noting its actual authorship is normally only called into question when research aims at directly attributing particular proposals for action. In such cases, it might be important to note which presidential adviser recommended or warned against a specific course of action. Such analysis might enable one to attribute exact responsibility for policies implemented and reveal potential problems in the decision-making process.

For purposes of this investigation, it will be assumed that the final product of the respective presidential doctrine - - his NSSR - - is the result of the individual president's beliefs being effected in a politically feasible manner. The president's policy is often tempered by the recommendations of his advisers, who may be more sensitive to the practical implications of policy than he is, but the president retains at least sole nominal responsibility for its content, having directed it.¹⁷ Additionally, because of the contemporary nature of NSSR's since GNA's enactment in 1986, it is essentially impossible to be able to pinpoint specific author's policies in the manner it might now be possible to do so for presidents whose National Security Council meetings' minutes have

¹⁷ Gilmer, Kelly. Duke University News Release and Interview with Professor Peter Feaver, regarding *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight, and Civil-Military Relations*, Harvard University Press: 2003. Feaver examines the bargaining process between civilian and military officials in defense policymaking.

been publicly disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act. In fact, since the actual NSSR's are published in both classified and unclassified versions, the assumptions made here and the conclusions derived should be noted as far from perfect. That is, the most precise analysis in answering the questions of this study would depend on access to the classified versions of the presidential NSSR's.¹⁸ The great claim for NSSR responsibility, then, will rest here within the respective president, who in fact makes the ultimate decision to attempt establishing the respective NSS. This suggests that strategic thinking - - though GNA implies it can be enhanced by processes and institutions - - can also be restricted by these same processes.

To complete this study, I have begun with a thorough reading of each president's NSSR's. The framework of this investigation will be restricted to the formal NSSR's issued since GNA's enactment. Recall that only the public versions of these NSSR's are accessible. The NSSR of a president as referred to in this study is the last NSSR issued by the president to Congress, noting the "last word" or "final stage" of a particular president's NSS.

Two sets of questions will be used to evaluate each president's NSS. The first set of questions is derived from the specific criteria for the NSSR outlined in the GNA amendment; it evaluates the *focus*, *coherence*, *integration*, and *time horizon* of each NSSR.¹⁹ The second set is derived from general observations of the NSSR's; it is concerned with the relationship between Congress and the president. These include:

¹⁸ Professor Peter Feaver has indicated that classified versions of the NSSR may not in fact exist. Feaver's first-hand experience with the Clinton Administration has indicated that classified versions of NSSR's were never drafted. If this is a normal occurrence, then this research qualification does not apply.

¹⁹ The criteria for the NSSR in the GNA amendment have been reduced to these elements by Don Snider in "The National Security Strategy: Documenting Strategic Vision." Strategic Studies Institute. 1995.

- (1) How does the NSSR aid Congress in evaluating, embracing or negating the current strategy?
- (2) How relevant have new security strategies remained?
- (3) What revisions have presidents made in their thinking regarding the NSSR? Why?
- (4) Can the core values of a president and his general attitude towards Congress be identified through the NSSR?

What these questions suggest is that the NSSR requirement illuminates the sometimes adversarial relationship between Congress and the president, as well as the subordinate and complementary relationship between the Defense Department and the president.

To draw conclusions from the answers to these questions, I will make use of a wide range of contemporary defense-planning literature relevant to the strategymaking process. At times, I employ the observations of these authors in an attempt to contribute to a synthesis of thought on the subject. At other times, I rely on interviews conducted with both members of Congress and congressional staffers involved in drafting GNA for additional insight. This investigation will examine the specifics of GNA's requirements for the NSSR in order to understand the historical problems in U.S. strategic planning. This study examines the implicit assumption made by GNA's requirement for an NSSR: processes and institutions can affect the quality of national security strategy. By examining the content of the NSSR's, this investigation will determine whether or not the NSSR's have met the GNA requirements and what effect these requirements have had on the quality of national security strategymaking.

Chapter Two provides a detailed look at GNA: the events sparking the defense reform debate, the factors leading to GNA's passage, and the story behind the specific

annual NSSR amendment. Chapter Three provides an overview of each president's NSSR and evaluates them according to the framework outlined earlier. Chapter Four provides a close comparison of the most recent changes in NSS and provides general insights into the strategymaking process. Chapter Five concludes the investigation with a summary of conclusions and hints at a new NSS model for U.S. grand strategy.

CHAPTER TWO

Goldwater-Nichols: The Drive for Enactment

Four and a half years of Congressional debate would occur before the Goldwater-Nichols Act was signed into law by President Reagan. The extended debate in Congress evolved from the increasingly evident perception of U.S. weakness in accomplishing its military objectives. To be sure, this perception was not unwarranted. U.S. operations in Vietnam, Iran, Lebanon and Grenada incited a debate between Congress and the nation's defense establishment regarding the perception of recurrent problems in defense communications and command structures.²⁰ When this perception of growing concerns within the defense establishment was confirmed and made public by two active senior military officials in the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David Jones and General Edward Meyer, Congress was compelled to address the issue. The debate over military organization that had ended 25 years previously with the Reorganization Act of 1958 had returned, and members of Congress were faced with the daunting task of eliminating the "undercurrent of skepticism regarding general U.S. military operational excellence."²¹ As Major Greg Parlier has noted in his study of GNA, the key issues in the debate that drove the legislation were: "recent joint military operations; procurement and acquisition problems; the military 'reform' movement; fear of an American 'General Staff', and the influence of key military and Congressional personalities."²²

The informal mandate for Congressional action was also a product of a changing international environment: The U.S. was in the midst of the Cold War, and

²⁰ Parlier, Greg. "The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986: Resurgence in Defense Reform and The Legacy of Eisenhower." War in the Modern Era Seminar. May 15, 1989: National Defense University

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

fears of a future operational failure which could trigger a potentially nuclear response were evident in the Congressional mindset.²³ More accurately, the Congressional effort to pass what would become the Goldwater-Nichols Act (GNA) was a result of the perception by Congress of executive irresponsibility. An early form of the GNA bill indicated:

“The conferees agreed that the President already has authority, as Commander in Chief, to establish such special combatant commands and to prescribe their chains of command. The conferees do believe that considerable study of how the President can more effectively use such authority in crises is needed. The role of the President and the Secretary of Defense in crises during the last 30 years has been inconsistent. In some instances, the President and the Secretary have failed to take prompt action to ensure the effective organization, employment, direction, and control of U.S. military forces committed to combat operations. As a consequence, streamlined command arrangements and other necessary adjustments tailored to the situation have not been established. In other instances, the President and the Secretary have been over-involved and have engaged in unnecessary micro-management of tactical operations.”²⁴

The specific executive-level offenders may have been many, but among them were such infamous accounts of abuse as the overzealous, dismissive attitude toward military judgment by President Kennedy’s Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, as well as a then-prone President Lyndon Johnson whimsically designating bombing targets from aerial photos spread amongst his rugs.²⁵ These specific accounts may have been in the distant past, but they represented the executive “micro-management” which each successive Congress had encountered in one form or another. Parlier also notes in his study that the years of “legislative dormancy” regarding defense reform did not carry into the 1980’s.

²³ United States Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. “Defense Organization: The Need for Change: Staff Report.” Washington, DC: GPO, 1985. Chapter Seven.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Isenberg, David. “Missing the Point: Why the Reforms of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Won’t Improve U.S. Defense Policy.” Cato Institute. Policy Analysis Number 100. February 29th, 1988.

This activism in defense reform he attributes to a number of factors, among them: the reception of the Packard Report on defense management and the independent Defense Organization Project; public statements made by General Jones and General Meyer critical of the strategic planning process; and the “defense reform movement” which emerged alongside the 1981 Congressional Military Reform Caucus.²⁶ Efforts like the Packard Commission conducted defense management studies examining the budget and procurement system, legislative oversight, and all defense organizational and operational arrangements. Specifically, the Packard Commission was formed by President Reagan in response to the severe criticism he was receiving as a result of now famous media reports of gross defense spending, including \$7,700 coffeepots and \$550 hammers.²⁷ Despite initial criticism regarding the political motivation for the commission, it did in fact recommend a series of changes in the defense establishment which were incorporated into GNA. In direct contrast to the period of legislative dormancy since defense reforms in 1958, then, the momentum generating by these corroborating factors compelled new Congressional action.

Indicative of more comprehensive problems in the defense establishment in the minds of reform leaders, these factors made more dramatic the perception of military failures that were both costly and embarrassing for the U.S. military. Even where the loss of life was necessarily limited, it was at least perceived that military operations were generally not performing acceptably. This was exactly the case in Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada, where the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) insisted that each of the four interested

²⁶ Parlier, Greg. “The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986: Resurgence in Defense Reform and The Legacy of Eisenhower.” War in the Modern Era Seminar. May 15, 1989: National Defense University

²⁷ According to James Locher, David Packard, chairman of the commission, was decidedly nonpartisan in his review and sincerely informed President Reagan as such: “I am pleased that you want us to do our job on a completely independent, nonpartisan basis. And that’s exactly what we’re going to do.”

military services play an integral role in the invasion.²⁸ Defense analyst William Lind noted of the Grenada invasion: “One early plan for the invasion would have produced something much closer to a coup de main. [. . .] This plan was overruled by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who demanded that all four services be involved - - just as in the Iran rescue mission. [. . .] So in what seems to have become the standard JCS approach to military operations, one that turns them into a pie-dividing contest among all the services, we ended up with a plan that allowed the enemy to put on a reasonably good show.”²⁹ The historical examples of the executive-level abuse that Congress had in mind, then, were not limited to the distant past.

Paving Toward GNA: Preventing the Ultimate Loss

Spurred by the military “whistleblowing,” Congressional leaders - - most notably Barry Goldwater and Bill Nichols - - were intent on preventing a failed U.S. operation that could perhaps be ultimately more costly. Strategy at that time was geared toward refining - - or, it is contended, creating - - U.S. nuclear strategic doctrine. The specter of a costly mistake which could escalate into war with a nuclear-armed Soviet superpower was certainly believed to be in the realm of possibility. In fact, Goldwater commented before the passage of GNA that: “The reorganization of the Department of Defense [DOD] may be the most important thing that Congress does in my lifetime. It will be the most important thing that I tried to do in mine.”³⁰ Making his point clearer, he noted: “If we have to fight tomorrow, these problems will cause Americans to die unnecessarily.

²⁸ Isenberg, David. “Missing the Point: Why the Reforms of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Won’t Improve U.S. Defense Policy.” Cato Institute. Policy Analysis Number 100. February 29th, 1988.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Parlier, Greg. “The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986: Resurgence in Defense Reform and The Legacy of Eisenhower.” War in the Modern Era Seminar. May 15, 1989: National Defense University

Even more, they may cause us to lose the fight [. . .] As we direct that changes be introduced into DOD to improve overall national security, we must make changes ourselves. I am casting the first stone and I am throwing it at our glass house here in the Congress.”³¹ One major objective of GNA, then, was to restore the perceived lost standard of U.S. military performance by transferring power from individual armed services branches to joint institutions within DOD, as well as executive administration officials.

Despite his passion for the issue, Goldwater was less than optimistic that GNA would be enacted. There were a range of issues that would have to be resolved before effective reorganization could be achieved. Among them were: taking care to maintain the balance of civil-military relations in the defense reorganization while expanding the degree of civilian control; discounting the perception that a newly-empowered Chairman of the JCS would create a “German General Staff”; and reinstating the professionalism of the JCS system. Mackubin Owens has notes that, “while it is possible to improve the U.S. national security process by refining the functions of the two branches, the Constitution itself limits what can be done.”³²

On a related note, Parlier notes that Congress was well aware of and had to combat the “General Upton Paradox,” or the notion that significant military reforms cannot be made without affecting the American political environment and national culture.³³ Parlier further concludes that GNA is thus an example of the “tendency of the

³¹ Parlier, Greg. “The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986: Resurgence in Defense Reform and The Legacy of Eisenhower.” War in the Modern Era Seminar. May 15, 1989: National Defense University

³² Owens, Mackubin Thomas. “The Hollow Promise of JCS Reform,” International Security. Volume 10, Number Three: Winter 1985-1986. pg. 107

³³ Parlier, Greg. “The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986: Resurgence in Defense Reform and The Legacy of Eisenhower.” War in the Modern Era Seminar. May 15, 1989: National Defense University

Congress toward micromanaging internal processes and procedures rather than mandating drastic organizational reform.”³⁴ But the reforms which GNA would eventually codify were indeed drastic organizational reforms. In some sense, then, this fact illuminates the breadth of influence that those responsible for passing GNA possessed. Indeed, the general effects of GNA on the defense establishment, for better or for worse, are debated to the present.

In his prescriptions, then, Parlier concludes correctly. The reforms GNA enacted focused on the internal dynamics of the President, Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs. Special attention was given to the means in which these three units of executive leadership would communicate. In turn, additional attention was also given to the means in which they would communicate with - - and ideally be restricted by - - Congress. For example, though GNA empowered the Chairman of the JCS (CJCS), it also required that his plans were fiscally constrained by the Secretary of Defense’s newly required assessment of available resources.

In the same manner, while the CJCS became the “principal military advisor” to the president, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense, individual service chiefs possess a right of dissent - - if they disagree a joint organization recommendation the CJCS will give to the president, the CJCS must present their views alongside his own. This right of dissent is expanded in matters such as proposals for the use of force; in such cases, the CJCS must present all individual positions of the JCS if they differ from his own.³⁵ In this way, GNA is able to enhance the military’s planning

³⁴ Parlier, Greg. “The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986: Resurgence in Defense Reform and The Legacy of Eisenhower.” War in the Modern Era Seminar. May 15, 1989: National Defense University

³⁵ Isenberg, David. “Missing the Point: Why the Reforms of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Won’t Improve U.S. Defense Policy.” Cato Institute. Policy Analysis Number 100. February 29th, 1988.

effectiveness while at the same time ensuring that JCS would not be able to circumvent a baseline degree of civilian control.

The emphasis GNA places upon streamlining the national command structure and strengthening civilian control of the armed services' strategic planning is evidenced by the role of the NSSR. As Goldwater noted of the command structure, "when the rope from the individual Services pulls in one direction and the rope from the Joint Chiefs pulls in the other direction, the individual Services invariably win that tug-of-war. The Services win the tug-of-war, but the country loses."³⁶ This problem was perceived to increasingly common with respect to strategic planning, and given some attention in the JCS right of dissent. However, it too was indicative of a more general problem: the absence of a focused, coherent, integrated and timely national security strategy.³⁷ GNA's amendment for the NSSR was aimed at solving this problem in strategic planning.

Approaching the GNA Amendment for an NSSR

A particular focus of GNA was to reduce the overall reporting requirements of the DOD while at the same time making those reports actually submitted more precise. The amendment to the National Security Act in GNA for the president to submit to Congress an "Annual Report on National Security Strategy" was also the first time Congress had demanded a formalized "blueprint" of the logic behind a president's strategic thinking. GNA mandated that the national security strategy (NSS) of the United States shall include a comprehensive description and discussion of the following:

³⁶ Goldwater, Barry. Congressional Record. Senate. Remarks on May 7th, 1986.

³⁷ Gaddis, John Lewis. "A Grand Strategy of Transformation," *Foreign Policy*. Nov/Dec 2003. pg. 54

- (1) The worldwide interests, goals, and objectives of the United States that are vital to the national security of the United States.
- (2) The foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter aggression and to implement the national security strategy of the United States.
- (3) The proposed short-term and long-term uses of the political, economic, military, and other elements of the national power of the United States to protect or promote the interests and achieve the goals and objectives referred to in paragraph (1).
- (4) The adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of the national power of the United States to support the implementation of the national security strategy.
- (5) Such other information as may be necessary to help inform Congress on matters relating to the national security strategy of the United States.³⁸

Additionally, GNA indicated that the NSS would be submitted to Congress in both a classified and unclassified form, though the existence of classified NSSR's remains in question. From these five requirements, one may derive the following, in respective order: "What [Congress] doubted, or disagreed with, was [a grand strategy's] *focus* in terms of values, interests and objectives; its *coherence* in terms of relating means to ends; its *integration* in terms of the elements of power; and its *time horizon*."³⁹ More specifically, the GNA amendment was a solution to the problems in strategic planning pointed out in the "Locher Report," formally known as *Defense Organization: The Need for Change*, the staff study to the Senate Armed Services Committee recommending 91 changes in 16 problem areas.⁴⁰

³⁸ United States. Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. Washington, DC: GPO, 1986. Public Law 99-433

³⁹ Gaddis, John Lewis. Foreign Policy. "A Grand Strategy of Transformation." *Foreign Policy*. November/December, 2002. pg. 54

⁴⁰ <http://www.ndu.edu/library/goldnich/goldnich.html>

It is interesting to note that the actual amendment requiring the annual NSSR from the president was added only during the markup phase of GNA. As James Locher has confirmed, Senator John Warner offered the amendment during an executive session of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Warner, a Republican Senator from Virginia, had a reputation for being both a “peacemaker” in Congress and of a “naval orientation,” a product of his service in both the Navy and Marine Corps, as well as having been President Nixon’s Secretary of the Navy.⁴¹ Warner had initially drafted the proposal for an annual NSSR from the president as a separate bill in the Senate. Eventually, he would become the leader of the opposition within the Senate Armed Services Committee, largely due to his military background.

Since GNA was perceived by many military officials as a threat to their power, and Warner had close personal ties to the military, his leadership in the opposition effort is important. However, it is more interesting to note that the GNA amendment resulting from the markup process might be seen as a significant challenge to GNA generally. James Locher has indicated that many of Warner’s amendments were in fact generally antagonistic to the reform process as envisioned by Goldwater and Nichols. On the other hand, Warner’s contribution to the drafting process was seen as significant: “When Warner, a sincere and considerate gentleman, matched [Goldwater’s and Nichols’] tone, the ingredients for a productive examination of the bill were present.”⁴²

Indeed, the importance of the amendment might be seen as a necessary compromise between the two sides in the reform debate. If Warner was opposed to many of GNA’s reforms which were seen as antagonistic to military officials, then winning

⁴¹ Locher, James. *Victory on the Potomac*. Texas A & M Press: 2002. pg. 361

⁴² *Ibid.* pg. 407

support for amendments like the requirement for the NSSR would result in a critical compromise. At the same time the civilian authority was being strengthened at the expense of the military authority, an amendment which required the president to confer with his advisers in drafting NSS, including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the influence of the military of the authority in a key area was being protected.

There was not significant debate on this particular amendment being included in GNA. Both sides involved in drafting GNA saw the amendment as a favorable one. But it is important to note that the amendment might be seen as an attempt by Warner to, as James Locher has noted, “deflect attention from military disunity in the Pentagon by indirectly implying a failure by the president to provide a strategic context for national security.”⁴³ Indeed, this was not the first time this avenue had been pursued in the context of defense reform. The unification debates which occurred in 1946 and 1947 saw Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal and his allies emphasize the need for a National Security Council type arrangement at the executive level, as opposed to the creation of a unified military establishment.⁴⁴ If this is an accurate assessment, then Warner’s amendment can be seen as indicative of a general strategy undertaken by reformers who have noted the failure of presidential strategy as the most important problem in providing for effective strategic planning. Indeed, it seems this may be the case. In 1987, Senator Warner’s amendment might have indirectly spurred Senator Nunn to conduct a series of 22 hearings by the Senate Armed Services Committee on aspects of strategic planning.⁴⁵ The issue was not an insignificant one, and might be seen as an important avenue in defense reform.

⁴³ Locher, James. Private Interview with Matthew Baldwin. 02-19-03, 02-28-03, 03-28-03.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

The amendment was added to GNA two months before it was passed in the Senate, on May 7th, 1986.⁴⁶ The inspiration for the amendment might be directly traced to Chapter Seven of the Locher Report, which most specifically addresses the subject of the Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS) of DOD. As the Locher Report notes, PPBS is “the formal process for arriving at resource allocation decisions. Its purpose is the translation of military strategy and planning into specific defense programs and the development of defense programs into a budget request.”⁴⁷ Problems in the first phase of the PPBS cycle, planning, are pointed to as being critically responsible for ineffective strategic planning.

Locher notes that this problem area had been formally recognized as early 1979 in the *Defense Resource Management Study*: “There is broad agreement that the first ‘P’ in PPBS is silent.”⁴⁸ Perhaps most damning was a statement by Robert W. Komer, former Under Secretary of Defense, regarding the process of U.S. strategic planning:

“As a former practitioner, my own evaluation of our non-nuclear strategymaking is harsh. There is all too little systematic strategymaking in DOD, except in the strategic nuclear arena. Instead the reality is best characterized as a piecemeal, irregular, highly informal process, largely driven by cumulative program decisions influenced more by budget constraints and consequent inter-service competition than by notions of U.S. strategic priorities. Little long term policy or strategic planning takes place, except for adapting to new technology. There is little consideration of strategic alternatives [. . .] All this is not to say that policy and strategic thinking does not recurrently influence programs and resource allocations, only that it does so in a spasmodic and usually unstructured way.”

According to Locher, these problems and the generally schizophrenic attention to non-nuclear strategymaking were determined to be the product of eight deficiencies in the PPBS cycle: “the dominance of programming and budgeting; the lack of management

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ United States Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. “Defense Organization: The Need for Change: Staff Report.” Washington, DC: GPO, 1985. Chapter Seven. pgs. 483-484

⁴⁸ Ibid. pg. 494

discipline in OSD, inability of the JCS System to provide useful strategic planning advice and to formulate military strategy; lack of consensus on coherent military strategy and related policies; inadequate strategic planning machinery; weak strategic planning tradition; inadequate policy and planning guidance; and insufficient guidance from the National Security Council.”⁴⁹ Of particular relevance to the solution provided by the GNA NSSR amendment was the common sentiment that those defense planning documents which were already required by law were “generally considered irrelevant to the process” and even, according to one Admiral “almost as valueless to read as it was fatiguing to write.”⁵⁰ In his analysis, Locher reminds Congress: “Strategy attempts to effectively employ given forces to achieve stated objectives. If there is any mismatch, it must be that the objectives are too great to be achieved by available forces.”⁵¹ The requirement for an annual NSSR hoped to remedy these chronic problems in the linkage between strategy and channeling resources to support these strategies.

The many solutions proposed to correct these strategic planning deficiencies are broken down into four categories: “(1) lessen the focus on programming and budgeting; (2) strengthen strategic planning skills; (3) create a separate strategic planning office either in OSD or OJCS; (4) make other changes to strengthen the prospects for improved strategic planning, including insulating strategic planners from excessive outside demands on their time and strengthening the mission orientation of organizations that contribute to the strategic planning process.”⁵² In this manner, the NSSR amendment might be seen as a possible solution to more than coherent strategymaking - - it can be

⁴⁹ Ibid. pg. 498

⁵⁰ Ibid. pg. 496

⁵¹ Ibid. pg. 498

⁵² Ibid. pg. 508

seen as an insurance policy that the means of strategymaking are more closely matched to the ends of strategymaking.

The most specific prescription for this study and the NSSR is referenced in the Locher Report as Option 7A: “redo major strategic planning documents less frequently to provide more time for thinking and to require less time for the process.”⁵³ The inspiration for the NSSR amendment, Option 7A additionally specifies that “it would be desirable to initiate a major and comprehensive strategic planning effort as soon as possible after the start of a new presidential term. This effort should receive the highest possible priority within DOD for its results will give overall direction to the Department’s policies for several years.”⁵⁴ This solution did in fact become the real prescription for managing and directing the general framework of U.S. strategic planning, in the form of the annual NSSR.

Bridging the Divide

As the prescription calls for, the NSSR is the document which frames the general direction of DOD planning. Is it possible, then, that the actual GNA prescription for the NSSR amendment more directly aids DOD than Congress? It might be that Congress was compelled to enact GNA and the NSSR amendment to address a problem that was seen as an inefficiency it was actually responsible for. As Locher notes, “Instability is one of the major problems in the PPB system. With the exception of unrealistic fiscal guidance, the causes of instability are clearly associated with external influences rather

⁵³ Ibid. pg. 512

⁵⁴ Ibid. pg. 525

than internal deficiencies. The Congress is the primary external source of this instability.”⁵⁵

This assertion is perhaps put into a larger context by Parlier, noting the “traditional American qualities of optimism (there need not be another war), ad hoc pragmatism (long-range planning is an undemocratic narrowing of options by technocrats), and openness (the public has the ‘right to know’).”⁵⁶ If Parlier’s description is correct, then it becomes more evident why Congress may be in some ways an adversary to the strategic planning process.

Whatever the case may be, with its stipulation for an annual NSS, Congress sought to redress these deficiencies through GNA by creating a three-tiered emphasis on the development of NSS. Beginning with the president, the NSS would be complemented by a report by the Secretary of Defense detailing such supplements as budget planning and procurement for the programs following from the NSSR. This would help ameliorate the problems of “unrealistic fiscal guidance” pointed to by Locher. The Secretary’s report would then outline the necessity of, justification for, and possibility of any military missions to be conducted pursuant to the NSS. Finally, the CJCS would submit a study under the guidance of the Secretary which would outline the direction of the national military strategy (NMS) in terms of strategic and contingency planning.⁵⁷

At the time, Congress was frustrated by the Reagan Administration’s seeming inability to formulate a coherent NSS; in some cases, it was said that such a feat would be

⁵⁵ Ibid. pg. 507

⁵⁶ Isenberg, David. “Missing the Point: Why the Reforms of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Won’t Improve U.S. Defense Policy.” Cato Institute. Policy Analysis Number 100. February 29th, 1988.

⁵⁷ United States. Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. Washington, DC: GPO, 1986. Public Law 99-433

impossible because, in fact, there was no coherent focus in Reagan's NSS. This characterization by some of that administration's critics was likely the product of the same kinds of schizophrenic strategymaking noted in this study earlier. Indeed, it seems that these characterizations were dominant until GNA effectively at least nominally made strategymaking more personalized, according to the respective president. As will be seen later, the NSSR's of both President Clinton and President George W. Bush have demonstrated this by virtue of the fact that their prescriptions have engendered public debate. This has been especially true of current President Bush's NSS, largely due to its introduction of a policy of strategic preemption.

The NSSR requirement of GNA aimed at bridging this three-tiered divide evident in the national security strategies of the past. As one scholar has noted, "The essence of strategy at any level is the tailoring of goals to resources within a specific internal and external political, military and economic environment. [. . .] A strategy whose goals far exceed resources available for their implementation is a recipe for potential disaster."⁵⁸ By integrating the three-tiers of NSS, NMS, and resource allocation, GNA laid the cornerstone for the rebirth of an effective national security strategy. The lost standard of military performance, effective strategy, had been framed for the president and his advisors. What was required of the president thereafter was a formulation of NSS that took demonstrated a serious, responsible plan for the employment of American resources:

⁵⁸ Isenberg, David. "Missing the Point: Why the Reforms of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Won't Improve U.S. Defense Policy." Cato Institute. Policy Analysis Number 100. February 29th, 1988.

in terms of reputation - - managing and maintaining a favorable American image abroad -
- effective deployment of resources, and other measures limiting potential losses of life.⁵⁹

It is debatable, indeed a major focus of this study, to determine whether NSSR's since GNA enactment have achieved this Congressional mandate. While the NSS reports have been issued, their language has sometimes been so broadly written as to confirm pre-GNA perceptions of strategy as "useless." Of course, this undermines the potency of the GNA amendment - - that an unclassified NSS report would serve the purpose of engendering public debate about the "best" foreign policy.⁶⁰ Perhaps recently, though, this trend has begun to change.

The following chapter will examine the particular NSSR's issued by each president and evaluate each according to the frameworks established in Chapter One.

⁵⁹ Garafano, John. "Using Force: Prescriptions For Improving Strategic Debate Part I: Broadening the Base of Expertise." National Security Affairs Strategic Studies Institute. US Army War College SSI Newsletter, November 1999.

⁶⁰ Miskel, James. "National Interests: Grand Purposes or Catchphrases?" Naval War College Review. Autumn 2002.

CHAPTER THREE

Changing National Security Strategy: An Overview of the Presidential Reports

After a series of critical operational failures, the Goldwater-Nichols Act was enacted to provide a legislative safeguard against future failures in U.S. national security strategy. In passing the act, Congress sought to correct significant deficiencies in general strategic planning and the Planning, Programming and Budgeting System (PPBS) cycle; to ensure that strategy was complemented by available resources, and vice-versa; and to ensure general fiscal efficiency in national defense spending.

Since the Act has been instituted, four presidents have each had multiple opportunities to meet these legal requirements. Though presidents have generally submitted the National Security Strategy Report (NSSR) later than the law requires, they have all at least nominally met the requirement of GNA. However, as some legislators have commented, it cannot be said that presidents have generally met the internal requirements of GNA.⁶¹ This chapter will focus on the specific strategic doctrines submitted by each president; its objective will to assess each report within the investigative framework established in Chapter One. Specifically, it will be asked, is this NSSR *focused* in terms of identifiable goals, *coherent* in terms of relating means to ends, *integrated* in terms of resource allocation, and set within the context of a specific *time horizon*? This chapter will provide a general overview of the NSSR's of presidents Reagan, H. Bush, Clinton, and W. Bush.

⁶¹ Gaddis, John Lewis. Foreign Policy. "A Grand Strategy of Transformation." *Foreign Policy*. November/December, 2002. pg. 54

President Ronald Reagan: A Blueprint for the Future

President Reagan was the first president required to meet the annual requirement of a National Security Strategy Report. He did so in 1987 and again in 1988 with a report outlining his vision for the American future. As this was the first attempt at drafting NSSR's, Reagan was careful to refer to the language of GNA in writing the report. In its introduction, for example, Reagan notes that the NSSR is the joint effort of "the Administration, Congress, and the American people over the past six years," and that "to be effective, it must be firmly rooted in broad national interests and objectives, supported by national resources, and integrate all relevant facets of national power to achieve our national objectives."⁶² This attribution is then followed by a general warning that the NSSR is only as a guide for the direction of national strategy, and not a static rulebook.

Finally, Reagan notes that the NSSR is only a part of general Foreign Policy and Defense Policy, the constitutive elements of national security strategy; the annual reports of the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense he notes as the more detailed supplements of national strategy.⁶³ This is in tune with the explicit requirements of GNA, but perhaps more indicative of the fact that this was the first report issued, and the President was making certain that the NSSR was not the only statement of his national security strategy.

As a whole, the report is well organized. It begins with a brief statement of the "American Perspective," proceeds to describe the elements of Foreign Policy and Defense Policy, and then outlines the general execution of the strategy. At the time the report was issued, the U.S. was in the midst of the Cold War. As such, its policy tenets

⁶² Reagan, Ronald. "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America." 1988. pg. 1

⁶³ Ibid.

are geared chiefly toward outpacing the efforts of the nation's chief adversary, the Soviet Union. Appropriately, then, the prescription for Foreign Policy is containment; the prescription for Defense Policy is deterrence.

The focus of the Reagan NSSR is divided into general tenets which are featured in all presidential reports: the maintenance of national security, preserving the strength of the economy, defending the cause of democracy, resolving disputes pertinent to U.S. interests, and forming common-cause alliances abroad. Obviously, the focus of each NSSR can vary greatly between presidents. In fact, it seems evident that all presidents following Reagan have employed the NSSR to make their case for a new era or age of American testing. That is, each perceives a particular set of challenges as unique to their time; correspondingly, each presents his strategic vision to surmount these challenges in the most strategically efficient manner. For Reagan, the particular challenge was to maintain a competitive edge against the Soviet Union in terms of both spheres of influence and effective military power.⁶⁴ At the same time, Reagan was concerned with expanding the nation's defense capabilities, which included such programs as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

The coherence, integration and time horizon of the Reagan NSSR is encompassed in its dual-pronged approach of containment and deterrence. To facilitate the effectiveness of these policies, Reagan placed great emphasis on the alliances which would help promote the democratic way of life and thereby reduce Soviet influence in the international community. This was stressed alongside programs for arms control and

⁶⁴ President Reagan notes: "One of the central tenets of our defense policy is that the U.S. will not seek to match the Soviets weapon for weapon. Rather, we will work to overcome Soviet numerical superiority by taking maximum advantage of the inherent strengths of alliances composed of democratic, industrialized, free economy nations." NSSR. pg. 20

SDI, which sought to enhance the strategy of deterrence. Of all the aspects of the Reagan NSSR, its time horizon seems the most uncertain element. The President could not provide a suitable timetable of action in the midst of a conflict which had already spanned decades, and his strategic recommendations stressed the uncertain nature of the conflict. Simply put, Soviet capabilities were not well known; containment and deterrence coupled with the capability for flexible response seemed the only means for managing such an uncertainty regarding the duration of U.S.-Soviet competition.

On another note, the integration aspect of the Reagan NSSR seems the most important for this discussion. That is, integration describes the long and short term plans for employing national instruments of power to achieve national objectives. Since this study examines the process in which Congress and president interact to draft NSS, and since integration describes the policy programs which Congress must approve to implement that NSS, then the integration plan might provide the most telling insight into the process. In the Execution section of the report, Reagan cites Congress as liable for integration deficiencies pertaining to foreign aid, sustained growth of the defense budget, and limited oversight.

In the area of foreign aid, Reagan notes drastic cuts in foreign operations budget requests as “penny wise and pound foolish.”⁶⁵ He argues that foreign aid enhances U.S. national security by protecting U.S. allies from threats too great to be engaged alone while at the same time communicating American ideals and virtues to foreigners who may be unaware of the mutual interest the U.S. has in promoting stable international economies.⁶⁶ Specifically, Reagan notes that Congress cut his budget request from \$16.2

⁶⁵ Reagan NSSR pg. 35

⁶⁶ Ibid.

billion to \$13.6 billion: “As a result, we are unable to fulfill our commitments to countries that provide us with strategically important basing and access rights. Indeed, some programs will have to be cut over 50 percent this year.”⁶⁷

In the area of sustaining growth of the defense budget, Reagan faults Congress for a decade of “costly and inefficient ups and downs” in defense spending which has limited the potential for the maintenance and modernization of the armed forces.⁶⁸ He refers specifically to his concurrently submitted FY88-89 Defense Budget, in which he notes that he did *not* request a defense increase similar to those submitted in the early 1980’s. Instead, he challenges Congress to implement sustained growth in defense spending alongside the sustained growth of the nation’s economy.

In the area of oversight, Reagan addresses Congress directly, displaying his contempt for what he sees as a remiss appropriations decision from Congress. When he notes his recommendations for improving the efficiency of the defense establishment, he cites a number of Congressional efforts which might result in a potentially more efficient national defense. Among these efforts are the Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management and the recently passed Goldwater - Nichols Reorganization Act.⁶⁹ However, Reagan’s sincerity regarding the beneficial effects of these developments seems at best a courtesy to Congress.

The report’s conclusion seems to be the most telling of Reagan’s general attitude toward Congress. He stresses the need for bipartisan cooperation throughout the report, but the conclusion directly calls upon Congress to realize that “a sound vision for the future and a realistic guide to action must be a cooperative endeavor of the Congress and

⁶⁷ Reagan NSSR pg. 36

⁶⁸ Ibid. pg. 37

⁶⁹ The act is not identified specifically, but it can be inferred that GNA is what the President refers to.

the Administration,” that “there can be no endeavor more important for the long-term well-being of the American people; and I solicit the Congress’ closest collaboration in achieving it.”⁷⁰ It can be said that Reagan’s NSSR made clear his perception of great obstacles to Congressional cooperation in realizing his strategy. As the record shows, this perception was certainly not unfounded.⁷¹ Goldwater-Nichols had set before the President a set of guidelines which aimed at enhancing the strategic planning process. By noting the potential problems to be faced in gathering Congressional support for his proposals, Reagan effectively delegated a large degree of responsibility for his strategy’s success to Congress. By citing three specific areas where appropriations were limited or drastically cut by Congress, he was making it clear that Congress was undermining his ability to conduct strategic foreign policy.

It is relevant to note that in April of 1986, Reagan sent a memorandum to the Committee on Armed Services which outlined his views on the current and future structure of the defense establishment. In the memo, as in his NSSR, it is clear that Reagan was fearful of strategically costly Congressional inaction. He boldly asserts his Constitutional authority as president and Commander in Chief: “Any legislation in which the issues of Legislative and Executive responsibilities are confused would be constitutionally suspect and would not meet with my approval.”⁷² This implicit threat to veto pending defense reform legislation reaffirmed his commitment to preserving and expanding executive responsibility. This idea is reinforced throughout the memo, and the first priority is grounded in the “general principle” that “the proper functioning of our

⁷⁰ Ibid. pg. 40

⁷¹ Recall that the 1986 congressional elections resulted in a Democratic majority in both House and Senate.

⁷² Reagan, Ronald. “Message From the President of the United States, Transmitting His Views on the Future Structure and Organization of Our Defense Establishment and the Legislative Steps That Should Be Taken to Implement Defense Reforms.” Washington, DC: GPO, 1986. pg. 2

defense establishment depends upon civilian authority that is unimpaired and capable of strong executive action.” This was another reminder to Congress to ensure the viability of his proposed programs, to compel Congress to “be more firmly committed to its constitutional obligations to raise and support armed forces.”⁷³

Clearly, then, Reagan was protecting his strategic vision from a possibly inactive Congress. Ironically, the law that was passed by Congress passed to ensure effective executive-ordered security strategy was being used by the chief executive against Congress: By making his NSSR focused and coherent in all areas except integration, Reagan was in effect pointing out to Congress that the successful execution of national security strategy would depend on their cooperation. He had met their demand for a focused, coherent and integrated NSS; it was now Congress’ responsibility to ensure that that vision was capable of being fulfilled. The responsibility that was leveled upon the president regarding strategic planning was accepted, but the President made it evident that he could not meet this requirement if Congress did not provide him with realistic defense funding to do so.

In sum, then, the Reagan NSSR, the first of the GNA-mandated national security strategy reports, was drafted in a manner that met the law’s general requirements.

However, it was evident that there was an internal flaw in the law’s requirements. Clause four of the law’s requirements for the content of the NSSR states:

“The adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of the national power of the United States to support the implementation of the national security strategy.”⁷⁴

⁷³ Ibid. pg. 9

⁷⁴ United States. Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. Washington, DC: GPO, 1986. Public Law 99-433

Reagan's call for Congressional cooperation points out the fact that while a president may judge the adequacy of U.S. capabilities to fund his efforts as both possible and reasonable, Congress may disagree and therefore nullify his efforts. At the time of his NSSR, Reagan did not ask Congress for dramatic spending increases to achieve his strategic vision - - in fact, he noted the radical up-and-down swings in defense spending in the 1980's as contributing to the instability of defense programs generally, and sought to avoid reinforcing this problem.⁷⁵

By the standards set forth in Goldwater-Nichols, Reagan's NSSR was focused and coherent. With the specter of the Soviet Union as the nation's chief adversary and a history of national policy grounded in containment and strategic deterrence, meeting the requirements of GNA was not a daunting task for Reagan. It was, however, a task which ensured the president was accountable for his strategy. This, in turn, provoked Reagan's response, which was to make Congress potentially accountable for the failure of his strategic vision.

⁷⁵ Reagan, Ronald. "Message From the President of the United States, Transmitting His Views on the Future Structure and Organization of Our Defense Establishment and the Legislative Steps That Should Be Taken to Implement Defense Reforms." Washington, DC: GPO, 1986. pg. 7

President George H.W. Bush: Adapting and Shaping the Future

President Bush's national security strategy is best characterized by its emphasis on adapting to the Post-Cold War challenges of "a new era," and taking action to shape the circumstances of that era.⁷⁶ The 33-page report issued in 1993 outlines the end of an era where containment was the American grand strategy and the Soviet Union the nation's chief adversary. In whole, the report attempts to summarize the changes in the international community which have followed after a series of events "unimaginable only three years ago."⁷⁷

The focus of the Bush NSSR is largely unclear. If there is a coherent focus in the report, it is in the emphasis on America's role as an alliance leader in the international community. This emphasis is understandable; at the time the report was issued, the U.S. had just won the Gulf War. There are some specific recommendations and priorities which are not found in the Reagan NSSR, notably the emphasis on illicit drug trade and crisis response. Nearly one third of the report is devoted to a geopolitical overview of significant changes abroad, a popular trend in the NSS reports. The remainder of the report is devoted to discussion about arms control, proliferation, forward force deployments, and military restructuring.

The Bush NSSR does not, however, approach the degree of focus found in the Reagan NSSR. Specifically, the Bush NSSR seems to have asserted and then grappled with uncertainty in an uncertain age. The requirement for a coherent, focused, and integrated national security strategy seems to have been an impossible duty for Bush. The introduction to the report in fact contains almost an entire page devoted to questions

⁷⁶ Bush, George H.W. "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America." 1993. pg. 1

⁷⁷ Ibid. pg. 1

about the current world order which are largely unanswered in the report. In fact, a third of the report is devoted to cataloguing the changes in the “new era” evolving from the decline of Soviet influence. Even in the area of economics, the H. Bush NSSR is almost entirely devoted to setting an agenda for the 1990’s generally, instead of the short term goals of the administration. This is perhaps a result of the NSSR’s emphasis on asserting the increasing importance of a global economy, with specific illustrations in the wake of the Gulf War.⁷⁸

This perhaps accounts for the new emphasis Bush placed on crisis response, and, possibly, hints at a policy of strategic preemption. At the beginning of the report on regional trends, Bush states: “A key task for the future will be maintaining regional balances and resolving such disputes before they erupt into military conflict.”⁷⁹ When compared to President George W. Bush’s statement of preemption, there is little difference in their meaning: “As a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.”⁸⁰ Other than a three-tiered non-proliferation strategy and limited gestures toward drug interdiction, the integration requirement is largely lacking. Bush’s main concern seems, at least implicitly, to discover the means for shaping an American international competitive advantage. To achieve such an advantage, Bush relied on strengthening the alliance system, as well as the United Nations.⁸¹

Bush’s relationship with Congress, reflected in his NSSR, paralleled the spirit of cooperation evidenced in the Reagan NSSR, but was grounded in a generally optimistic

⁷⁸ Ibid. pg. 19

⁷⁹ Ibid. pg. 8

⁸⁰ Bush, George W. “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America.” pg. 2

⁸¹ H. Bush NSSR. pg. 12

tone. Unlike Reagan, Bush did not criticize Congress for inaction, or invoke the specter of his authority as Commander in Chief. Instead, Bush attempted to charm Congress with the possibilities of executive and legislative cooperation: “This is a heavy responsibility, shared between the President and Congress. We owe our servicemen and women not only the best equipment, but also a coherent strategy and posture geared to new realities. This coherence can only come from a partnership between the Branches. Divided, we will invite disasters. United, we can overcome any challenge.”⁸²

Despite this optimism, the Bush NSSR is determinedly weak in meeting the requirements of GNA. Its focus is vague, the product of an uncertain transition from four decades of Cold War containment to an international environment where there was no clear national adversary. The Bush NSSR can be said to have satisfied the requirement of coherence only in the sense that it advocated the championing of American ideals abroad, chiefly through America’s continued leadership in international, pro-democracy alliances. Its time horizon is thus necessarily vague. Its integration is therefore restrained, even though it marks the first time a president has applied an overarching review of American policy in all major areas of the international community.

In all, though, despite the attempt at comprehensiveness, it seems that the integration of a new strategic vision could not occur if it Bush was uncertain about which programs or which general action plan would need to be implemented to ensure America’s continued leadership in international affairs. Thus, the H. Bush NSSR leaves one with a sense that changes are occurring and that more will be necessary. It is generally unclear at what specific strategies may be called for in the future, and what policies might be warranted when those strategies are adopted.

⁸² Ibid. pg. 33

President Bill Clinton: Engagement and Enlargement

President Clinton's NSSR is quite explicit in naming its strategic doctrine, but an examination of the NSSR's vision reveals that "engagement" is far from an explicit strategic doctrine. In fact, Clinton's NSSR seems to grapple with the same uncertainty that characterizes the H. Bush's NSS. That is, "engagement" might easily be likened to the "Adapt and Shape" attitude invoked by H. Bush. Its guiding principle of engagement is prefaced by the same principles of all NSS's: "protecting our interests and advancing our values." Clinton's NSS is in fact more explicit than his predecessor's, a fact which both corroborates and differentiates his doctrine of engagement from H. Bush's. Roughly 84 pages long, the sheer volume of the report's content reinforces this characterization.⁸³

Clinton's NSS of engagement offers a foreign policy stance which advocates protecting American interests abroad in a largely uncontroversial manner. Clinton does make distinctions between types of national interests - - vital, important and humanitarian - - but these distinctions only serve to more specifically indicate the varying degrees of engagement that may be necessary. It is unique in that it stresses the importance of America's role in "a global age." That is, globalization is both explicitly defined and referred to for justifying much of the engagement programs that one scholar⁸⁴ has noted is indicative of an additional element of Clinton's vision: the dual-pronged approach of engagement and "enlargement."⁸⁵

⁸³ It should be noted that this is the lengthiest NSSR produced to date. Professor Peter Feaver, Duke University, has noted that the extended length of the 2000 report might be a product of it being written as an explicit policy plan for Clinton's potential presidential successor, Al Gore. It is also interesting to note that of Clinton's six NSSR's, the five reports prior to this one are each entitled "A National Security Strategy For A New Century"; the sixth one is entitled "A National Security Strategy For A Global Age," and includes the previous doctrine of engagement tempered with newer discussion of globalization.

⁸⁴ Brinkley, Douglas. "Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine." *Foreign Policy*. Nov/Dec 2000.

⁸⁵ Brinkley notes, "Face the Nation," Interview Transcript, 09-23-03, that enlargement consists of the "continuation of NATO enlargement" and "the belief that democracy comes to countries when they can

President Clinton's attitude in general in the NSSR seems restrained: By noting the occurrence of increasing globalization, he diminishes America's potential influence in world affairs at the same time he champions the importance of American leadership. This is not contradictory; President Clinton is noting that the phenomenon of globalization necessarily means that American influence has become increasingly bound by other nation's policies. While this is a debatable consequence, it is more important to note that President Clinton's general attitude is similar to H. Bush's in its uncertainty. In fact, it may be that Clinton was able to more accurately specify "globalization" as the term which accounted for America's "uncertain future" following the Cold War.

If this is correct, then President Clinton's NSSR is more coherent than President H. Bush's. Because he has identified the phenomenon which creates this complicated uncertainty, Clinton is able to propose an integrated action plan which seeks to more effectively control and account for it. President Clinton seems to be proposing exactly this: "The ability to assure global security, shared prosperity and freedom is beyond the power of any one nation. But the actions of many nations often follow from the actions of one."⁸⁶ This is in some sense a departure from H. Bush's emphasis on America's ability to proactively shape its future. While President Clinton's perception of international affairs is contestable, it is important to note that, objectively, his NSS is more focused, coherent and integrated than his predecessor's.

This seems to point to a problem which GNA cannot perhaps ever adequately address: controlling for presidential misperception. Perhaps realizing that Congress

buy American exports, when they have a middle-class consumer culture. So it was a kind of democracy through trade, enlargement through enlarging the most successful security organization, NATO, to guarantee success in Europe."

⁸⁶ Clinton, William J. "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America." 2000. pg. 4

could only limitedly control for the general direction of a president's NSS, GNA was passed to ensure only that, whatever the direction of a president's NSS, it would at least be required to be strategically sound. To be sure, Congress can directly control the general output of a NSS through appropriations, but as far as strategic guidance it is limited. This seems inherently problematic and might require an investigation of the actual practical effects of the NSSR in Congressional affairs. If the NSSR figures at all notably in deciding defense appropriations or authorization for extended and covert military operations, for instance, then perhaps Congress can effectively control for a NSS that seemed contrary to current intelligence estimates. In other instances, the link between Congressmen, congressional staffers and Pentagon officials may be more telling. The classified versions of NSSR's may provide evidence leading to this conclusion, and it may also be insightful into the process by which Congressional armed services and intelligence committees can restrain a president's course of action that contradicts current intelligence estimates. On the other hand, if classified versions of NSSR's do not exist, this would be telling of the role of the NSSR as a public relations document.

Clinton's doctrine of engagement is bound by concerns of national interest.

Throughout the report, Clinton includes discussion of how a security challenges can be ameliorated by engagement. In outlining the strategy of engagement, Clinton notes:

“Nations with whom we had been philosophically opposed during much of the Cold War are in the process of tremendous political and economic change. Our engagement with these states over the last eight years has been focused on encouraging them to undertake important political and economic reforms while at the same time dissuading them from regressing into confrontational relationships. Our efforts with the most populous of these nations -- China and Russia -- have been intended to offer opportunities and incentives for proactive participation, while also encouraging them to be responsible members of the world community. This means progress in respecting the rights of individuals and nations in areas as diverse as the environment, humanitarian issues, the rule of law, and economic

fairness. While the outcome of transformation in these nations is not altogether certain, our engagement has had a positive impact on both regional and global stability.”⁸⁷

At all times, President Clinton stresses the importance of engaging in a principled manner: “so that when we choose to engage, we can do so to prevent conflict, assist failing states, or counter potential regional aggressors as necessary.”⁸⁸ Though this is a generally vague litmus test for warranting engagement, it is based on what Clinton refers to as the NSSR’s “strategic architecture,” necessitating a generally proactive foreign policy orientation.⁸⁹ Like the H. Bush NSS, though, the time horizon of the report is necessarily vague. Its integration aspect is nearly comprehensive; indeed, the third section of the report, itself 33 pages long, is dedicated entirely to “Integrated Regional Approaches.” Clinton’s NSS is further integrated with respect to his emphasis on global security through financial security. It notes the importance of the WTO, NAFTA, and other trade developments for international security as essentially linked: “there can be no security where there is no hope of prosperity.”⁹⁰

At times, Clinton’s assertiveness undermines the potency of his NSS. Though this is certainly an exception and not the rule, Clinton concludes his NSSR with an apparent straw man argument for endorsing engagement: “Although past is not necessarily prologue, the inexorable trend of globalization supports the continued viability of a strategy of engagement. We must not, in reaction to the real or perceived

⁸⁷ Clinton NSSR pg. 6

⁸⁸ Ibid. pg. 8

⁸⁹ Ibid. pg. 83

⁹⁰ Ibid. pg. 4

costs of engagement, retreat into a policy of ‘Fortress America.’⁹¹ Largely the product of strategic assessments by President H. Bush to simultaneously promote Taiwanese defense and an Antiballistic Missile Defense program, this characterization seems to be more of an attack on the previous administration’s doctrine than an assertion of President Clinton’s own doctrine. It is surprising that such a statement would be included within the last two sentences of the Clinton NSSR. After 83 pages of detailed plans for engagement and enlargement, President Clinton seems to be lending more weight to calls for “Fortress America” concept than necessary. It is clear by this point in the NSSR that Clinton will lead the nation in the direction of engagement - - internationalism, clearly not a direction toward “Fortress America.” The characterization is an inaccurate one: the H. Bush NSSR discounts the possibility of “Fortress America” in its determinedness to remain an active partner in strategic international alliances.

On a related note, the Clinton NSSR perhaps compromises a degree of its coherence when it overrules the general prescription that globalization limits the influence of a single nation: “We act in alliance or partnership when others share our interests, but will act unilaterally when compelling national interests so demand.”⁹² Clinton seems to be guaranteeing that his NSS will not be restricted by the complexities of a global age, which include increasingly complex alliance systems. This seems to change the implications of his introductory statement that many nations will follow the leadership of one. What Clinton seems to be pointing out, though, is the same general uncertainty that the H. Bush NSS perceived. Clinton’s statement here, which later military interventions undertaken under both his and H. Bush’s administrations would

⁹¹ Ibid. pg. 84

⁹² Ibid. pg. 25

prove, is that America will act according to its national interests despite an increasingly uncertain international environment. Again, President Clinton takes care to differentiate his NSS from that of his predecessor.

Interestingly, Clinton's NSSR indicates that Congress only figures in his NSS in a supplementary fashion: In almost all cases, Congress is cited only when Clinton notes legislation already passed which corroborates a specific policy recommendation or when he asks for their support "to bear the costs of defending U.S. interests."⁹³ The remaining requests include: granting "fast track" authority, ensuring the implementation of particular defense programs, and expanding international trade agreements. Clinton's NSSR, then, displays a generally neutral attitude toward Congress. Unlike President H. Bush, he did not attempt to charm them with the fortuitous prospects of unified cooperation. Unlike President Reagan, he did not criticize them for restraining his defense policies. The only instance where he moves in this direction is when he mentions the role of Congress to ensure that the U.S. military is the "best-trained, best-equipped, most effective armed forces in the world."⁹⁴ In one respect, this sternness and poise in the face of a Republican-controlled Congress and in the wake of *Contract for America* has been attributed to President Clinton's confidence in actively restraining Congress through his veto power.⁹⁵

Also unlike all his predecessors, Clinton did not mention Congress even a single time in either the introduction or the conclusion to his NSS, places where his

⁹³ Ibid. pg. 37

⁹⁴ Ibid. pg. 39

⁹⁵ Conley, Richard. "President Clinton and the Republican Congress, 1995-2000: Vetoes, Veto Threats, and Legislative Strategy." Paper prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 30 - September 2, 2001, San Francisco, CA.

predecessors often directly appealed to Congress in seeking a powerful, unified effort. Accordingly, Clinton seems to have adopted a stern or perhaps indifferent attitude toward Congress. Unlike President Reagan, who was explicit in his sternness toward Congress, Clinton seems quite implicitly stern. That is, the manner in which he mentions Congress reflects an assumption that Congress will follow his prescriptions without contest.

Clinton's 1999 NSSR, however, does in fact mention Congress in its introduction and conclusion. Though its strategic tenets are identical, its attitude toward Congress is not. When one recalls the underlying motives at work in the 2000 NSSR mentioned earlier, this seems logical. If the 2000 report was a policy guideline or blueprint for a possible Gore Administration, then the attitude it adopts toward Congress is deliberately indifferent. It is also noteworthy that the 1999 report specifically mentions GNA and the manner in which that NSSR hopes to achieve GNA's requirements, while the 2000 report does not.

In any case, the Clinton NSSR succeeds in fulfilling GNA's requirements in a manner that the H. Bush report does not. Though both the H. Bush and Clinton NSS's grapple with the perception of an uncertain future, Clinton seems to have been able to specify in a more focused and integrated manner the direction of his strategic vision. In some sense, this is a product of his two-term presidency, which in some instances has been characterized as a struggle by that administration to build a lasting legacy. Whatever the reason, though, the Clinton NSSR abides by GNA's requirements better than President H. Bush's, is necessarily less focused than Reagan's, and sets a high standard of integration for his predecessors.

President George W. Bush: Power and Preemption

President W. Bush's NSSR is perhaps the most controversial of the NSSR's studied here because of its content and the language it employs. Specifically, it marks a dramatic break from previous NSSR's in rejecting the strategy of containment while at the same time tempering that break with explicitly moral language. Whereas President Clinton's NSSR can be said to have marked the first dramatic break from NSSR's of the past with its policy of active engagement, President W. Bush's NSSR follows suit but is much more dramatic in the way it makes its prescriptions.

It is not a humble NSSR. It does not shy away from creating a perception of American pride, even excessive pride, a fact which has contributed to its reception of widespread criticism. For instance, in the conclusion of Bush's introduction to the report he notes: "Today, humanity holds in its hand the opportunity to further freedom's triumph over all these foes. The United States welcomes our responsibility to lead in this great mission."⁹⁶ The NSSR continues by adding a degree of weight to this responsibility of American leadership, making at least implicitly stern its attitude toward policies of the past: "In all cases, international obligations are to be taken seriously. They are not to be undertaken symbolically to rally support for an ideal without furthering its entertainment."⁹⁷ This is made more evident when one recalls the main strategic tenet of the W. Bush NSSR: "America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed [. . .] In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action."⁹⁸ President W. Bush's NSSR repeatedly emphasizes the responsibility of American power within the international community. And, in contrast to all previous

⁹⁶ W. Bush NSSR, pg. V

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid. pg. IV

NSSR's, it explicitly envelops all of its tenets with a moral commitment to the "values of freedom": "People everywhere want to be able to speak freely; choose who will govern them; worship as they please; educate their children - - male and female; own property; and enjoy the benefits of their labor."⁹⁹ These tenets underpin the whole of the W. Bush NSSR.

Whereas previous NSSR's have included small subsections on the importance of promoting the democratic ideal abroad, or stated a dedication to fighting terrorism, tyranny and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the W. Bush NSSR takes these assertions one step further. Its emphasis on direct, even preemptive action to solve these problems sets it apart from doctrines of the past, which grappled with uncertainty. The "new world" that Bush makes repeat reference to is symptomatic of this rejection of uncertainty; the "new world" is the U.S. after the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001.

The W. Bush NSSR, in its prescription for American activism abroad, goes so far as to make claims about the nature of many of these problems: "Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders."¹⁰⁰ It makes no pretense of the judgment it reserves for those who would seek to thwart these values of freedom: "the allies of terror are the enemies of civilization."¹⁰¹

It is relevant to note here that the W. Bush NSSR was in fact not released until September of 2002, nearly a year late according to the prescriptions of GNA. Thus, the Bush Administration in some sense benefited from the fact that they had not already

⁹⁹ Bush NSSR pg. III

¹⁰⁰ Bush NSSR pg. IV

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

published a NSSR before September 11th, 2001. If it had, there would almost certainly been a radical shift in the administration's strategic thinking that is now find in the NSSR. It would have necessitated revisions in strategic thinking or general policy orientation that has been noted by scholars such as Peter Feaver and Don Snider - - making clear the notion that NSSR's are always susceptible to being overcome by unforeseeable events in the international environment. The terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001, constituted one such event; it was, however, only coincidence that the W. Bush Administration had not already published their NSSR.

The W. Bush report is 31 pages long, with an additional three page introductory letter by the president. Interestingly, what has come to be known as the Bush Doctrine was seen early on in a variety of speeches across the nation. All of the tenets of the doctrine are captured in the president's introductory letter and the NSSR, but President W. Bush's NSSR is the first to include quotations by the president at the opening of each chapter of the NSSR. Many of the chapters specifying the basic tenets of Bush's international strategy are begun with quotes from a West Point speech delivered on June 1st, 2002; other chapters are more specific, such as a speech at the National Cathedral immediately after September 11th, 2001, and another from a speech at Monterrey, Mexico, in a chapter on global trade.

The NSSR also makes no mention whatsoever of the requirements of GNA. Indeed, it mentions Congress only once in its 31 pages, and only as a subsection of executive and congressional cooperation in promoting the administration's trade strategy. In this sense, it seems to betray the president's perception that he had a national mandate for action, a perception that is perhaps not inaccurate because of the terrorist attacks

which inspired it. In this way, it is similar to a number of President Clinton's NSSR's in its indifference towards Congress. When combined with the chapter quotations, it might be said that the W. Bush NSSR follows the increasingly evident trend that NSS has become more personalized according to the respective president. By opening each chapter of strategy with a quote from the President Bush on the chapter's issue, the NSSR makes more evident the notion that the NSSR may be generally seen as a snapshot of the president's thinking - - and, contestably, a blueprint for the direction of foreign policy.

The focus of the W. Bush NSSR is stated as: “[. . .] based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests. The aim of this strategy is to help make the world not just safer but better. Our goals on the path to progress are clear: political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity. And this path is not America's alone. It is open to all.”¹⁰² This opening assertion of the goals of the NSSR indicates a key feature of President W. Bush's NSS: it claims to be geared toward protecting values asserted to be universal. That is, America may have “unprecedented - - and unequaled - - strength in the world,” but the values that it seeks to preserve are those which are “open to all.”¹⁰³ In this way, the NSSR makes its case for “a distinctly American internationalism” which has established itself as the “single sustainable model for national success.”¹⁰⁴

In one sense, this may be interpreted as American arrogance - - it can certainly be contested that there are alternative models for national success, even in countries which do not respect the values of freedom championed by the W. Bush NSSR. For Bush, though, the claim seems to be more accurately that success may be possible in countries

¹⁰² Ibid. pg. 1

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. pg. II

and “rogue states” which employ alternative models for success, but that only those nations which protect the values of freedom will guarantee that they will “unleash the potential of their people and assure their future prosperity.”¹⁰⁵ The W. Bush NSSR, then, does not allow for relativistic counterclaims to be justified. It asserts what is “right,” what actions constitute “evil” governing, and the like. Though these assertions are a large part of what has made the W. Bush NSSR so controversial, the NSSR cannot be said to lack focus.

The W. Bush NSSR derives much of its moral and political weight for international activism from its focus on the responsibility of U.S. power in a U.S.-dominant international community, however controversial a statement this may be perceived to be. In a larger context, this might be seen as a product of the circumstances which produced it: Bush fully believed that America’s way of life was attacked, and his NSS would make sure that the principles of the American way of life were not only protected, but confidently reasserted. And, it seems, even to the degree that the right to preventative war or anticipatory self-defense would be asserted, a claim which doubtless contributed to its critical reception abroad.

The coherence of the W. Bush NSSR is qualified in the fourth chapter of the NSSR: “No doctrine can anticipate every circumstance to which U.S. action - - direct or indirect - - is warranted. We have finite political, economic, and military resources to meet our global priorities.”¹⁰⁶ The two “strategic principles in mind” which will serve as the guides for U.S. action are stated as “building international relationships and institutions that can help manage local crises when they emerge” and “be realistic about

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. pg. 9

[the U.S.] ability to help those who are unwilling or unready to help themselves.”¹⁰⁷

These principles are very similar to many of the previous NSSR’s and seem of limited use, other than to make it clear that the NSS will exercise restraint in its commitments. This might be different from the “Adapt and Shape” strategy pursued by President H. Bush or the “Engagement and Enlargement” strategy pursued by President Clinton, but it seems commonsensical that any strategy pursued by any president will necessarily be restrained by what is feasible and realistic. If the point of stating this notion is to differentiate President W. Bush’s NSSR from previous ones - - and it is not clear that this is what is intended - - then there might be additional utility in mentioning it.

In general, though, the coherence of the NSSR can be said to be both innovative and limited. What differentiates President Bush’s NSSR strategically from his predecessors is its adherence to the concept of a right of strategic preemption. An explanation of the logic behind this adherence is found in the fifth chapter of the NSSR, where Bush prefaces it by explicitly stating the failure of strategic deterrence. He notes that deterrence is unlikely to prevent rogue states from using weapons of mass destruction; and, in contrast to the Cold War, weapons of mass destruction are often seen by America’s enemies as “weapons of choice” rather than “weapons of last resort.”¹⁰⁸ Moreover, he appeals to historical tradition: “For centuries, international law recognized that nations need not suffer an attack before they can lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger of attack.”¹⁰⁹ Additionally, he notes that presently the U.S. must “adapt the concept of imminent threat to the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. pg. 15

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

capabilities and objectives of today's adversaries."¹¹⁰ However, it has been noted that the NSS does not wholly abandon strategic deterrence, as one of the four defining purposes of the U.S. military is described as: to "deter threats against U.S. interests, allies, and friends."¹¹¹ On a related note, the NSS also expands upon preemption to actually include preventative war: as one report has noted, permitting one to attack "even in the absence of specific evidence of a coming attack."¹¹² That the NSSR does not sufficiently clarify the distinction between preemption and preventative war may be seen as a deficiency in its coherence.

In fact, President W. Bush invokes the attacks of September 11th, 2001, to justify strategic preemption, most especially - - but not exclusively - - against terrorists. Most conclusively, strategic preemption is outlined as: "The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction - - and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively."¹¹³ It must be noted, though, that the uniqueness of the W. Bush NSSR is not that it justifies anticipatory self-defense or preemptive action, but only that it emphasizes it as a guiding strategic principle.

To be sure, strategic preemption is not a new concept, but including it as a central tenet of U.S. national security strategy - - as explicitly and with such a pretense of moral weight - - is a new concept. Indeed, this is a fact which has resulted in significant criticism of the NSS because the instances in which it will be exercised is too general to

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Brookings Institution. "The New National Security Strategy and Preemption." Policy Brief #113. December 2002. pg. 4

¹¹² Ibid. pg. 3

¹¹³ Ibid.

be strategically effective: The NSS should “clarify and limit the conditions under which it might be applied” in order to preserve its utility and prevent the possibility of encouraging other nations to justify their own preemption.¹¹⁴ This would perhaps significantly improve the NSSR’s coherence.

The integration of President W. Bush’s NSSR does not meet the heights of thoroughness evident in President Clinton’s NSSR. Indeed, amongst all the NSSR’s, Clinton’s remain the most thorough in their prescriptions for integration. Although, to further differentiate this NSSR from those preceding it, its prescriptions for action seem to be construed as subordinate to its explicitly stated guiding principles. That is, even a casual glance at its chapter headings of the NSSR seems to read like an outline for integrated action.

However, though the NSSR provides an outline of its strategy tuned by an explicit set of guiding principles, the detail given to vast majority of its policy implications is significantly brief. Though this permits the NSS flexibility, it only nominally meets the integration requirement of GNA. It might be the case that the emphasis on a general plan for preserving the values of freedom detracts from the ability of the NSSR to be explicit in its integration. If even ad hoc coalitions are endorsed at the expense of institutions like NATO and the U.N., then only the principles of the NSSR will be able to guide U.S. action in a potentially never-ending state of international realignments. Such a fact invites criticism that the NSSR is not in fact a NSS, but a vague action plan to reach very specific value-driven goals: “The United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe. We will actively work to bring the hope

¹¹⁴ Ibid. pg. 2

of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world.”¹¹⁵
This might be corroborated by the assertion that: “The U.S. national security strategy will be based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests.”¹¹⁶

As one report has made abundantly clear, though, the NSSR does not take into account the difficult limitations on integrating this policy, especially in the context of the number of countries in the international community that do not share “America’s commitment to ‘seeking the rewards of liberty.’”¹¹⁷ Indeed, in instances like these, the NSSR seems to border on dangerous hypocrisy: “failing to have a clear plan for preventing authoritarian governments from using the war on terrorism to perpetuate their rule maximizes political costs [. . .] unless the United States closes the gap between its words and its deeds, it risks fueling the very threats that imperil its security.”¹¹⁸ The NSSR’s time horizon suffers from a similar but perhaps correlated lapse in precision - - it offers a pronouncement of ever-present principles, not a time table. This lapse may evidence the correlation that the war “seeking the rewards of liberty” is, in fact, timeless.

Congress may be provided with a reliable indicator of the principles guiding W. Bush’s thinking, then, but the range of policy implications possible from such principles may in fact be infinitely diverse. Where the NSSR does approach some degree of explicit integration is in the areas of global trade and, perhaps most importantly, international cooperation. Regarding the latter, the NSS seems to be that W. Bush will work to preserve the “common principles” of its allies “by organizing coalitions - - as broad as

¹¹⁵ W. Bush NSSR pg. IV

¹¹⁶ Ibid. pg. 7

¹¹⁷ Daalder, Ivo. Lindsay, James. Steinberg, James. Brookings Policy Brief. “The Bush National Security Strategy: An Evaluation.” October 4, 2002. pg. 5

¹¹⁸ Ibid. pg. 6

practicable - - of states able and willing to promote a balance of power that favors freedom.”¹¹⁹ Interestingly, it might be noted that if the U.S. is asserted to be the nation which most ably has contributed to the balance of freedom, then coalitions that promote the balance of freedom may be construed as coalitions which favor particular U.S. interests. This, too, is arguably admirable or controversial.

Some critics might contend that this NSS therefore presents a skewed view of the responsibility of U.S. power in the international community, but such criticisms might depend upon a more skeptical view of the U.S. pursuit of its interests. Briefly, the engagement principles of President Bush’s NSSR may seem to be unusually geared toward policies which lend themselves toward the use of force, a fact which naturally encounters criticism. As Charles Knight notes: “As emphasis on exploiting military primacy invites the very competition it seeks to forestall and risks eventual re-polarization of the world. Failure to discuss this problem is a very significant omission from the strategy.”¹²⁰

The omission of the rationale for this proactive orientation might be found, however, in the implicit assertion that the NSSR makes: Coalitions, even ad hoc coalitions, that are created to protect the “values of freedom” outlined in the opening of the NSSR outweigh the possible risks of re-polarization. Indeed, it may be inferred from the NSSR that President Bush is attempting to force the issue: By defining the divide between the U.S. and its enemies while at the same time asserting U.S. military primacy, the objective can be seen to be waging war against those who limit or disrupt the values of freedom. As Charles Krauthammer has noted, President Bush’s NSS marks:

¹¹⁹ W. Bush NSSR pg. 25

¹²⁰ Knight, Charles. “Essential Elements Missing in the National Security Strategy of 2002.” Center for International Relations. Boston University. October 9, 2002. pg. 4

“a return to the unabashed unilateralism of the 1980’s [. . .] the 1980’s model went by the name of peace through strength. But it was more than that. It was judicious but unapologetic unilateralism. It was willingness - - in the face of threats and bluster from foreign adversaries and nervous apprehension from domestic critics - - to do what the U.S. needed to do for its own security. Regardless.”¹²¹

One recalls that the NSS was crafted in the wake of the September 11th, 2001, terrorist attacks - - a time when the use of force was granted in the pursuit of self-defense. There is thus something to be said for the value of this NSS’s explicitness in its championing of the proactive use of force - - as the anti-terror campaign in Afghanistan and events in the United Nations leading to the U.S.-led war in Iraq seem to confirm. Finally, if the current U.S. effort for multilateralism in dealing with the North Korean crisis is any indication, then two conclusions may be drawn: first, the W. Bush NSS is not as adamant about its willingness to engage unilaterally where clear national interests are at stake; and second, that criticism noting the W. Bush NSS’s breach of diplomacy in lieu of force is less compelling than some have maintained.¹²² It is debatable, then, whether or not it is more accurate to say that the current NSS is based upon pressing “American firmness” in the international community and forcing that community to accommodate to this American firmness.”¹²³

In sum, President W. Bush’s NSSR meets the requirements of GNA with respect to focus and coherence, but falls short of the standard of integration set by President Clinton, whose thoroughness in stating policies specific to world regions has yet to be met by other presidents. The time horizon of nearly every NSSR seems to have been problematic. It is possible that the classified versions of the NSSR’s submitted to

¹²¹ Krauthammer, Charles. “The Bush Doctrine.” *Time*. New York. March 5, 2001.

¹²² Inspired from statements made by Peter Feaver, Duke University Political Science panel, “War in Iraq.” March 25, 2003.

¹²³ Krauthammer, Charles. “The Bush Doctrine.” *Time*. New York. March 5, 2001.

Congress make the time horizons of these more detailed policy plans clearer. It bears repeating, though, that a final and most precise judgment of the NSSR's in meeting GNA's requirements might be possible only to those with access to the classified versions of the NSSR's; or, if these classified versions do not exist, to those with access to the supplementary documents employed by the president's advisers in drafting the NSSR - - sources not available in this study. On the other hand, deficiencies in public versions of NSSR's may also be evident in any other version of the NSSR's, lending merit to an examination of the deficiencies observed thus far.

CHAPTER FOUR

Connecting the Dots

It is interesting to note, given the current W. Bush NSSR emphasis on American values of freedom and the war against terrorism, that terrorism and the “war of ideas” abroad is featured in every NSSR to date. Admittedly, the effect of terrorism on U.S. national security strategy was limited in scope until September 11th, 2001. Conflicts such as the Cold War and the Gulf War were more significant to U.S. national security than the attention given to the war on terrorism. But no NSSR was remiss in noting the threat of terrorism for a simple reason outlined by President Reagan in his 1987 NSSR: “[Terrorism] directly attacks our democratic values, undermines our diplomatic efforts for peaceful solutions to conflicts, and erodes the foundations of civilized societies.”¹²⁴ For these reasons, largely definitional, the war on terrorism has been linked with the war of ideas in the international community.

This explicit linkage holds for all of the NSSR’s. Regarding the war of ideas, President H. Bush adds: “We will increase our efforts to clarify what America has to contribute to the solution of global problems - - and to drive home democracy’s place in this process.”¹²⁵ President Clinton states: “Pursuing policies that are guided by these values, and the open economic and political processes through which they are typically manifested, will in the long term strengthen international peace and stability, and reinforce the positive aspects of globalization.”¹²⁶ President W. Bush’s NSSR is certainly the NSSR most responsive to the war on terrorism, in context as well as in substance. It begins with a letter citing terror, terrorists and terrorism fifteen times in three pages - -

¹²⁴ Reagan NSSR. 1987. pg. 7

¹²⁵ H. Bush NSSR. 1991. pg. 13

¹²⁶ Clinton NSSR. 2000. pg. 9

thirteen of these in the first two pages of the letter and in eight separate paragraphs.

Beyond this frequency, the Bush NSSR devotes an entire chapter to its plan to “disrupt and destroy terrorist organizations of global reach” and concludes: “We will never forget that we are ultimately fighting for our democratic values and way of life. Freedom and fear are at war . . .”¹²⁷

The export of American democratic principles abroad is thus not a recent development; scholars of “globalization” maintain that what is conceived of as a “global culture” follows from a markedly American template.¹²⁸ Indeed, this dominant export of American culture, whether contended to be imperialistic or not, is exactly what political scientists refer to when the specter of the Roman Empire is invoked alongside modern America.¹²⁹ Similarly, these notions are referred to in discussions of American exceptionalism.¹³⁰ Whatever the judgment reserved for this export, though, it is always in the U.S.’s interest to fight terrorism and promote democratic institutions abroad. As one scholar has noted, “to help create a world safe for democracy is to follow a policy that seamlessly fuses our bedrock principles with our self-interest.”¹³¹

In particular, the W. Bush NSSR makes a claim that is more controversial than those which have preceded it regarding the war of ideas: it rejects Samuel Huntington’s infamous “clash of civilizations” theory¹³²: “When it comes to the common rights and needs of men and women, there is no clash of civilizations. The requirements of freedom

¹²⁷ H. Bush NSSR. pg. 7

¹²⁸ See: Stanley Hoffman, “Clash of Globalizations.” *Foreign Affairs*. New York. Jul/Aug 2002.

¹²⁹ See: *The Wilson Quarterly*. Washington. Summer 2002: Martin Walker, “What Kind of Empire?” and Robert Litwak, “The Imperial Republic After 9/11.”

¹³⁰ Brooks, S. and Wohlforth, W. “American Primacy in Perspective.” *Foreign Affairs*. Jul/Aug. 2002.

¹³¹ Podhoretz, Norman. Empower America conference speech, “Why anti-Americanism?” 2003.

¹³² Podhoretz, Norman. “In Praise of the Bush Doctrine.” *Commentary*. New York: Sep 2002. pg. 7

apply fully to Africa and Latin America and the entire Islamic world.”¹³³ By claiming the values of freedom championed by U.S. policy are universal, the Bush Doctrine hints that it seeks to accomplish more than token statements regarding American values. It aims at winning the war of ideas by promoting and instituting these values of freedom abroad, in a proactive fashion: “We will also wage a war of ideas to win the battle against international terrorism. This includes: [Making] clear that all acts of terrorism are illegitimate [. . .] viewed in the same light as slavery, piracy, or genocide [. . .]; [ensuring] that the conditions and ideologies that promote terrorism do not find fertile ground in any nation [. . .]; diminishing the underlying conditions that spawn terrorism [. . .]; and [promoting] the free flow of information and ideas to kindle the hopes and aspirations of freedom [. . .]”¹³⁴

The prevalence of the assertion of the war of ideas and the war on terrorism could, on the other hand, be reduced to the recognition that U.S. presidents have always recognized the importance of these particular policies. If this is the case, then the personalized nature of the NSSR’s may be said to be restrained to a great extent important national interests. That is, the NSS must always be responsive to confirmed threats, but the NSSR enables the president flexibility in managing less certain threats or threats personally perceived to be evident. The Afghanistan anti-terror campaign begun by President W. Bush is the result of action upon a confirmed threat; current policies toward India and Pakistan represent limited action toward a less certain, perhaps more delicate, threat.

¹³³ Bush, George W. “Commencement Speech at West Point.” June 1st, 2002.

¹³⁴ W. Bush NSSR. pg. 6

The flexibility of the NSS is featured in the gravity the particular president ascribes to perceived threats. Distinctions between two different presidents' NSSR's make this clear. The variations in tone and efforts to correct such emerging threats are often the product of a less certain threat becoming increasingly certain, as the current administration's policy shift to a war on global terrorism suggests. But the same campaign could have been waged without the particular assertions evident in the current President W. NSSR. The NSSR, then, empowers a president with the ability to formally shape the framework of action plans.

In this sense, the NSSR might then be said to be more resourceful to Pentagon and defense-planning officials, and less resourceful to Congressional officials. The particular utility of the NSSR for Congress might then be most relevant for purposes of Congressional oversight, in the sense that Congress uses the NSSR reactively, operating like Samuel Popkin's fire department model.¹³⁵ In this respect, the public publishing of the NSSR serves an additional function: It enters the president's strategic thinking and global priorities into the realm of public debate, further reinforcing his accountability.

Of course, the value and relevance of this debate will vary depending on its audience. It seems obvious that senior administration officials such as the Secretary of Defense, National Security Adviser and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff will always influence the drafting process of the NSSR more than any member of Congress. But it seems that a president's NSS, along with the manner in which he presents it in the NSSR, can certainly have a direct effect on an individual's determination to support or oppose the respective administration. There is evidence to indicate that this is the case.

¹³⁵ Popkin, Samuel. "The Reasoning Voter." Chicago Press. 2nd edition. Pg. 47.

For instance, at the outset of the Reagan Administration, broad public debate began about the possibility of a long-range plan for increased defense spending. The justification for this long-range, sustained grand strategy was the threat of the Soviet Union and its satellite countries. In the end, public support affirmed the grand strategy in order to diminish the Soviet threat.¹³⁶ Generally, then, if NSSR's continue to become increasingly personalized, then one might expect the frequency of the NSSR's being a focal point of an administration's critical reception, for better or for worse, will also increase.

It is also important to note, though, that Congress - - through GNA - - was asserting its authority over the president by setting at least a nominal, legal standard for drafting NSS. Beginning with President Clinton's NSSR, though, it seems that there has been a "counterattack" of asserted authority by the chief executive upon Congress. In some sense, the NSSR might be seen as the president speaking before Congress, summoned to inform them about the direction his national security strategy will carry the nation. But the NSSR's of President Clinton and President W. Bush might have produced the unintended result of potentially empowering the president. If the president makes an effective presentation of his NSSR, then members of Congress may be inclined in the future to support the president's policy - - having judged his plan beneficial or at least practically sound.

Revealing Comparisons?

The NSSR's since GNA's enactment have met their Congressional mandate with varying degrees of success. While the NSSR's have been issued, their language has at

¹³⁶ Miskel, James. "National Interests: Grand Purposes or Catchphrases?" *Naval War College Review*. Autumn 2002.

times been so broadly written as to warrant an infinite range of policy options. This certainly undermines the intent of the GNA amendment - - that the NSSR serve the purpose of engendering public debate about the “best” or strategically sound foreign policy.¹³⁷ Recently, this trend seems to have begun to change. Note the differences in language between (1) and (2), excerpts from two presidential NSS reports.

(1) “Our strategic approach recognizes that we must lead abroad if we are to be secure at home, but we cannot lead abroad unless we are strong at home. We must be prepared and willing to use all appropriate instruments of national power to influence the actions of other states and non-state actors. Today's complex security environment demands that all our instruments of national power be effectively integrated to achieve our security objectives. We must have the demonstrated will and capabilities to continue to exert global leadership and remain the preferred security partner for the community of states that share our interests.”¹³⁸

(2) “The gravest danger our Nation faces lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicates that they are doing so with determination. The United States will not allow these efforts to succeed. We will build defenses against ballistic missiles and other means of delivery. We will cooperate with other nations to deny, contain, and curtail our enemies’ efforts to acquire dangerous technologies. And, as a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.”¹³⁹

In (1), the outline suggests that the U.S. will “exert global leadership” - - and all instruments of national power - - while remaining the preferred security partner” in a policy of global engagement. The language explicitly states basic assumptions about the logic of possible action in a “complex security environment.” It is framed in language that is predominantly passive: The repeat emphasis on the “We must...” phrase detracts

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Clinton NSSR. pg. 6

¹³⁹ W. Bush NSSR pg. 4

from the effectiveness of the NSS as a plan of action. Instead, the reliance on “we must” might indicate that this NSSR borders on a request to act.

In (2), the outline suggests that the U.S. will act to “build defenses,” “cooperate,” “curtail,” and “defend” in a preemptive manner where necessary. Instead of stating basic assumptions about possible action, the language explicitly states a promise to act in a new international environment. The repeat emphasis on the “We will...” phrase makes this NSS appear to be telling the reader that this direction of national strategy will in fact be pursued.

Comparatively, whereas (1) is more passive and general in its approach, (2) is more aggressive and specific. Admittedly, Clinton (1) was not faced with a catalyzing event like W. Bush (2) was. The September 11th, 2001, attacks perhaps mandated a drastic shift in strategic thinking, and (2) makes explicit the statement that a specific course of action will be pursued. Because (2) is more specific in stating its strategic thinking, one might conclude that it is closer to achieving the mandate of GNA by outlining the course of foreign policy the president will follow. It should be noted, however, that the two NSSR’s recommend largely the *same* policy of “engagement.” The difference is in the qualifications the W. Bush NSSR makes to temper Clinton’s strategic “engagement” with explicit moral judgments and a strategy built upon the threat of force - - anticipatory or preventative force.

If it has been assumed that the WTC attacks called for a new approach to fulfilling the GNA requirements of NSS, what might have been the logic behind vague language in NSS reports before the WTC attacks? One scholar concludes that this is because leaders nominally adopt either realist or idealist definitions of national interest

and then practically always “chart the middle ground between the two national-interest schools.”¹⁴⁰ On the whole, though, “neither school has it exactly right” - - strict definitions of national interest are too often “frustrating and ultimately sterile exercises.”¹⁴¹ Another scholar indicates a more pragmatic rationale: “Information about a critical subject like national security is power - - pure, raw power - - and the stakes are high. Rarely is power generously shared or given away in Washington.”¹⁴² It might be, then, that explicit statements compromise the relative power of the president.

It was earlier asserted, though, that there might be some additional utility to making more explicit the NSSR statement; increasingly personalized, the NSSR might be potential empowering for a president. One explanation for this is that explicit statements, though they limit presidential flexibility in general, permit a president to more successfully “mobilize the national effort.”¹⁴³ By linking explicit moral values and principles with the national interest, plans of action are also more coherent and might then lend themselves to domestic political support more easily. As one scholar has indicated:

“Obligatory tips of the hat to the national interest have intellectual appeal in that they appear to validate the expectation of scholars, legislators, and voters that statesmen will base their decisions on reasoned evaluations of the connection between ends and means. After all, without a clear picture of the ends - - national interests - - objective comparisons of alternative courses of action would be (and, as importantly, would be perceived by voters as being) little more than guesswork.”¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Miskel, James. “National Interests: Grand Purposes or Catchphrases?” *Naval War College Review*. Autumn 2002.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Sabato, Larry. As quoted in Gaddis, John Lewis. “A Grand Strategy of Transformation.” *Foreign Policy*. Nov/Dec 2002. pg. 53

¹⁴³ Miskel, James. “National Interests: Grand Purposes or Catchphrases?” *Naval War College Review*. Autumn 2002.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

An alternative explanation may be that the NSSR becomes a clear signal to a nation's adversaries what course of action the nation is prepared to take in order to protect its interests, as well as the respective president's long-term objectives. In this case, game theory models may suggest a variety of strategic reasons for drafting an NSSR that is either deliberately explicit or deliberately vague.¹⁴⁵

For instance, consider the case of baiting an opponent. A deliberately vague NSSR could be drafted to incite a potential adversary to commit to a course of action secretly desired by the drafters. Assuming initial acceptable risk, the drafters could now have a comparative advantage against their adversary - - and reason to act upon this new opportunity, satisfying their initial desire. The draftee could then reactively draft a more specific plan of action to engage the adversary and thwart his action plan - - the objective all along. In still other cases, the same method might be employed to offer an opponent a short-term advantage in order to provide oneself with a long-term benefit.¹⁴⁶ This may seem to violate the intent of the GNA amendment, but a classified version of an NSSR or one which was vague about a long-term plan could reveal a need for this course of action and wisely win approval for it in advance.

In general, though, President Clinton and President W. Bush seem to have ignited a new trend in national security strategymaking. By making the NSS increasingly personalized, committed to international engagement and tempering the strategy with an American insistence on values of freedom, national security strategy has become riskier at the same time it has become more productive. More interesting, though, it may be the case that a new strategy of forceful and principled engagement is emerging. If it is, it is

¹⁴⁵ Inspired from commentary by Albert Eldridge, Duke University Professor of Political Science. 2003.

¹⁴⁶ Strategic Studies Institute. "The Principles of War in the 21st Century: Strategic Considerations." August 1st, 1995. William Johnsen; Douglas Johnson II; James Kievit; Douglas Lovelace, Jr.; Steven Metz

the product of President Clinton's policy of engagement, hardened by the factors leading to (and recent effects of) President W. Bush's endorsement of preventative warfare.

The following concluding chapter will examine these most recent developments in U.S. national security strategymaking, questioning whether or not a new American grand strategy is about to emerge. Additionally, it will seek to provide a final assessment of the effect the GNA amendment has had upon national security strategymaking. To do so, general conclusions regarding the development of NSSR's since GNA's enactment will be inferred.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

The Warner Amendment in the Context of Recent Trends

The Warner amendment to GNA mandating an annual report on national security strategy from the president to Congress has provided cues to the direction of American foreign and defense policy for nearly two decades. This study set out to evaluate the NSSR's according to the GNA requirements, but it also sought to answer the following questions:

How does the NSSR aid Congress in evaluating, as well as embracing or negating, the current NSS?

Congress can only negate the NSSR indirectly. Defense appropriations is the most obvious avenue available to Congress for curtailing the implementation of a president's NSS. Though the NSSR's serve to engender public debate amongst the various constituencies with a vested interest in the direction of U.S. national security strategy, it is in fact the responsibility of the nation's defense planners to embrace the president's NSS. In hindsight, according to Popkin's model of congressional oversight, Congress may in fact be able to limit, restrain or control for presidential misperception in reaching NSS goals, but considerable breadth is given the Commander in Chief when it comes to planning for the nation's defense. Of course, this is one of his primary roles as president, but members of Congress also have a vested interest in ensuring that the needs of their constituents are at least addressed. Indeed, the difficulties evident in passing GNA and its amendments reflect this complementary and sometimes adversarial relationship between Congress and president.

The role the Warner amendment has played in evaluating a president's NSS has been generally characterized by members involved in drafting GNA as less than expected

or admirable, but this is the direct result of presidents not abiding by the rubric set up in the GNA amendment. Chapter Three explored the ways in which some NSSR's achieved the mandate better than others, but generally no NSSR met all the required expectations.

What this seems to indicate is that presidents have traditionally had great difficulty in articulating their national security strategies. The GNA amendment sought to actually improve U.S. strategic planning by providing a thorough explanation of what constitutes effective NSS. The difficulty in meeting this requirement has sometimes been attributed to deliberate political motivations (addressing or failing to address a particular constituency or policy program) as well as deliberate strategic ones (there may be tactical value in being more or less publicly explicit than required). But the difficulties in national security strategymaking are also indicative the competition and bargaining at work in the processes and institutions which play a role in defense planning. Notable here are the relationships of civilian and military authorities: the president, his advisers, and the military command structure, as well as members of Congress, their staffers, and Pentagon officials.

On the other hand, the GNA amendment is the standard presidents are expected to meet in drafting their NSS's and which many NSSR's have explicitly addressed in one form or another. Whether these gestures are either sincere or token is a judgment reserved for particular NSSR's, not of the process generally. It does seem that presidents and their advisers are becoming more accountable with respect to the amendment. Generally, strategymaking is being taken increasingly seriously by presidents and their advisers, if only because it is in their self-interest to do so. That is, the NSSR is becoming increasingly more useful to presidents because it is so often *the* reference point

by which their action plans *as well as* the success of their undertaken actions are judged. Most importantly, by providing a standard of sound strategymaking, the GNA amendment actually seeks to improve the chances that a president's NSS will be embraced and heeded by Congress even in the absence of general bipartisanship. That is, Congress is much more likely to support a NSS if its principles are sound - - and, correspondingly, able to be effectively communicated to its constituents. This is especially true when the strategy calls for the use of force, as current events in the Bush Administration have made clear.¹⁴⁷ The NSSR, then, is also becoming increasingly useful as a public relations and a public policy document.

How relevant have new security strategies remained?

New strategies have remained particularly relevant in the context of current NSS being shaped by NSS's of the past, but are all subject to becoming irrelevant in the context of unforeseeable events. This has resulted in a strategymaking process that has sometimes been too vague to be a reliable indicator of future action. At still other times, this has resulted in a strategymaking process that is retarded or ignores the GNA amendment's deadline. Some have attributed this tardiness as a built-in problem of the GNA amendment - - the deadline for the NSSR occurs within two weeks of the president's State of the Union address, which by virtue of media attention subordinates the NSSR. In other instances, strategymaking has been so thorough in its prescriptions for integration that its basic strategic principles cannot be defined, except to say that they are protective of the national interest. What is most important to note, though, is that grand national security strategies - - NSS's which define the foreign policy of an extended period, such as Cold War "containment" - - have significant effects on the

¹⁴⁷ Tarbet, Larry. "National Security Strategy and Public Opinion." CSC 1989. USMC.

processes and institutions of the nation's defense establishment. As this study will later cite, the possibility of a new emerging grand strategy might be evidenced by such institutions as the Office of Homeland Security.

What revisions have presidents made in their thinking regarding the NSSR? Why?

As the first question explained, presidents have generally become more accountable and more interested in strategymaking. This self-interest in strategymaking has already been characterized as a response to developments in domestic politics, but it is also the product of the increasingly personalized nature of the NSSR. NSSR's since President Clinton's have displayed a marked interest in reinforcing the perception that national success is closely tied to a president's personal attributes. In this sense, presidents have become increasingly proactive in asserting their policy orientations, and this is especially true in the current NSSR. The current NSSR might generally be seen as the next logical step in furthering President Clinton's strategy of engagement and enlargement, but it is also uniquely distinctive because of the language it employs. That is, the GNA amendment requires only that the components of sound strategymaking are heeded - - it does not require a president to personalize the strategy. That presidents have chosen to do this, and the trend has held to date, reflects the possibility that presidents are now employing the NSSR as a medium for magnifying the perception and influence of their policies, and not only because it is required by law.

Can the core values of a president's foreign policy and thus his general attitude toward Congress be identified through the NSSR?

The core values of a president's foreign policy as well as his general attitude toward Congress could be identified through the NSSR's in the case of President Reagan and President H. Bush, but that trend is no longer accurate. Faced with an opposition-

dominant Congress, President Reagan in 1987 and 1988 made clear in his NSSR that he believed Congress was an active adversary of the prescriptions his NSS called for. Hoping for the fortuitous prospects of bipartisan cooperation, President H. Bush singled out Congress in praise. By the end of President Clinton's administration, though, this trend has largely faded. Where gestures toward Congress had been the norm, the final precedent set by President Clinton was to assume the effective presentation of the NSSR would warrant Congress' support even in the absence of these gestures. This trend was confirmed in President W. Bush's NSSR, which also did not mention Congress in the ways presidents other than President Clinton had done. This might be suggestive of a new trend that features presidents making an assumption in favor of the successful implementation of their strategies. More specifically, it may represent a change in presidents' thinking with respect to making explicit the need for Congressional cooperation in implementing their strategy's policies.

On the other hand, the core values of a president seem to have always influenced the manner in which the NSSR has been crafted. Most evident today in the current NSSR than perhaps ever before has been the effect value-driven language can have on the public reception of the NSSR. Indeed, as noted previously, the NSSR's utility as a reference point or snapshot of a president's thinking has only increased within the last decade. When combined with a trend of increasingly personalized NSSR's, a president's values become more evident by virtue of the assumptions made in the process of correcting specific problems.

The Importance of National Security Strategy Doctrine

“The plan of a war embraces the whole military operation. Through it the operation becomes a single act, which must have one final, definitive object in which all other objects have been merged. No war is begun, or at least, no war should be begun, if people acted wisely, without first finding an answer to the question: what is to be attained by and in war? The first is the final object; the other is the intermediate aim. This dominant idea prescribes the whole course of the war, determines the extent of the means and the measure of energy; its influence manifests itself down to the smallest details of action.”

-Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*.¹⁴⁸

Clausewitz is referring here to grand military strategy. This is different from the NSSR's investigated here, but the NSSR's are the template from which more detailed and substantive national military strategy (NMS) is derived. The quote from Clausewitz, however, does identify the key elements of sound strategic planning required by the GNA amendment: focus, coherence, and integration.

NSSR's can generally be seen as addressing a variety of constituencies in order to cue supplementary plans for integration. For instance, when President Reagan decided to continue the strategy of deterrence and containment in a more proactive fashion, programs such as the Strategic Defense Initiative were begun. As Clausewitz states, “the plan of a war” defines the essence of the actions taken in support of that plan. It is a guideline for both the type of and intensity of required actions; it is in a sense a comprehensive filter for all actions taken in pursuit of the desired goal. This is the manner in which a president's NSSR, his doctrine, is translated into more detailed NMS. The NSSR or presidential doctrine is an outline of the president's strategic thinking, focused in its integration to achieve short- and long-term foreign policy goals.

¹⁴⁸ Clausewitz, Karl von. *War, Politics, and Power: from On War and I Believe and Profess.* Regnery. 1965. pg. 139

The study of strategic doctrine is certainly not the sole specialty of Clausewitz. Indeed, as Josef Joffe notes, “democracies are not fond of Clausewitz. While they are wedded to peace and, in the end, willing to plunge into unlimited war, democracies do not move smoothly along the ‘Clausewitzian continuum’ where diplomacy and violence are but shades of one and the same spectrum of options.” The question of what particular strategic doctrine should guide U.S. action received intense scrutiny during the Cold War, for example, in the context of U.S. nuclear strategy.

As Henry Kissinger has been famously quoted: “What in the name of God is strategic superiority?”¹⁴⁹ While the strategic debate during and in the wake of the Cold War focused on concepts which are not dominant today (concepts such as nuclear parity, stability and damage limitation), it is important to note that a particular brand of strategic thinking dominated NSS thinking for forty years. James Locher, author of the staff study that would become the basis for GNA, keenly notes:

“[There has been a] weak tradition of strategic planning in DOD. U.S. strategic thought is really a product of World War II and the post-war world. For most of American history, the U.S. military did not need to formulate grand strategy. Since World War II, much work has been done on nuclear strategy and policy, but conventional strategy and policy have suffered from inadequate attention. The weak tradition of strategic planning is also evidenced by the failure of the U.S. military education system to focus systematically on it, for example through strategic war games or the study of military history. As Liddell Hart put it, ‘in all our military training . . . we invert the true order of thought - - considering techniques first, tactics second, and strategy last.’ ”¹⁵⁰

As has been noted, since the advent of GNA, presidential doctrines have tended to be increasingly personalized. But this might be too simplistic a conclusion. It might more accurately be the case that the framework of strategic debate since GNA has

¹⁴⁹ Marder, Murrey. “Summit Clouded by Watergate.” *Washington Post*. July 4th, 1974. Dusseldorf.

¹⁵⁰ United States Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. “Defense Organization: The Need for Change: Staff Report.” Washington, DC: GPO, 1985. Chapter Seven. pg. 497

proceeded not so much according to each president's thinking, but only that each president's thinking has determined the particular policy avenues through which objective challenges will be met. The development of NSS might then be said to be proceeding along a single continuum. Moreover, the possibility of the evolution of NSS along the Clausewitzian continuum might indicate that the necessary reversal in proceeding from strategy-first to techniques-last has in fact occurred. One recalls that newer strategies are always shaped by the effects of strategies of the past, that desirable policy avenues may or may not be available due to the prior effects of previous strategies. At the same time, though, there is evidence to suggest that the last decade of foreign policy initiatives, combined with a strategic regrouping in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks, has resulted in the emergence of a new U.S. grand strategy.

A New U.S. Grand Strategy?

The effect of the September 11th, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States marked a drastic departure from traditional American assumptions about national security. Though it would be more than a year after the terrorist attacks before President W. Bush would release his NSSR, he hinted at the changes necessary for preserving national security long before. In a variety of speeches before the nation, at memorial services and even at the U.S. military academy at West Point, Bush began to make clear his endorsement for a new national security doctrine of strategic preemption. Moreover, he would identify international terrorism, the war of ideas, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as a grave intersection of chief threats to U.S. national security. These threats were, of course, not imperceptible before September 11th, 2001,

but they had never proven themselves to be so damaging to U.S. national security, especially on the American homeland. As the Chapter Four has documented, in every NSSR these threats were explicitly addressed as growing threat which demanded attention - - the September 11th attacks made this threat not only explicit, but explicit within the American homeland. When these threats became concrete, what resulted was a new emphasis on the use of force in NSS. Moreover, it is evident that Hart's strategy-first necessity is definitely being met.

This perhaps confirms a built-in benefit of the GNA amendment: presidents almost always improve upon the strategies advanced by their predecessors. Of particular importance here are the NSSR's advanced by President Clinton and President W. Bush. As the last chapter showed, the current NSS is built upon President Clinton's "engagement and enlargement," but it is tempered by the various forms of American exceptionalism found in President Bush's doctrine. In the wake of the September 11th, 2001, terrorist attacks, this assertion of American exceptionalism necessitated a more forceful doctrine.

The result is what might be called forceful engagement and enlargement - - or, as John Lewis Gaddis has posed, "transformation," - - in the sense that the Bush Administration has clearly shown that it is prepared to use *both* the threat of force and the use of force to guarantee that the self-interested policy of democratic enlargement is instituted abroad. As Gaddis has noted, the modifications of the current NSSR made to President Clinton's NSSR are significant: it is proactive, more coherent, assertive of the

role a hegemon fills in the international community, complements power with principle, and is candid.¹⁵¹

In this sense, current strategy, the product of a rejection of traditional assumptions in U.S. national security combined with a modification of foreign policy begun in President Clinton's administration, may have in fact disproved Joffe's notion that democracies do not proceed according to the "Clausewitzian continuum." This assumption is depending on only one decade of foreign policy, though, and not the long-term characterization that is the essence of Joffe's assertion. It might be permitted, though, if the assertions made by the current NSSR hold true: "recent developments have encouraged our hope that a truly global consensus about basic principles is slowly taking shape."¹⁵² More specifically, the NSSR's "global consensus" is in the context of "several potential great powers," including Russia, India, and China. It might be more accurate to say, then, that this "global consensus" is really a consensus from the most potentially powerful nations and not a true consensus.

In this case, viewing American exceptionalism alongside a Clausewitzian continuum becomes more important. Douglas Brinkley has noted this emphasis on American exceptionalism in the NSSR more critically:

"The problem with that, if people are supposed to model themselves after our country, the United States if we are the city on the hill and the great democratic country, we want people to follow the way that we do things, how can we ever justify any other country having a doctrine like that? So it really is a bit of American exceptionalism."¹⁵³

This characterization points to a problem in strategic coherence addressed in Chapter Three, but it might in fact be the case that such a development is occurring. As Charles

¹⁵¹ Gaddis, John Lewis. "A Grand Strategy of Transformation." *Foreign Policy*. Nov/Dec 2002. pg. 54

¹⁵² W. Bush NSSR pg. 29

¹⁵³ Brinkley, Douglas. "Face the Nation," Interview Transcript. 09-23-03

Knight has noted, “The new Bush administration has promoted a revival of the Reagan doctrine of regime change, but rather than pursuing that objective covertly or through proxy forces as before, it now pursues it overtly and through direct military action.”¹⁵⁴ This preference for the use of force might be more accurately seen as the result of U.S. comparative dominance in the international community, especially since no Soviet-like competitor can challenge or so completely deter U.S. interventions. John Gaddis has indicated this point quite concisely: “Preemption in turn requires hegemony.”¹⁵⁵

In contrast to what might normally be expected, the case for strategic American exceptionalism is made in three ways: there has been no attempt at balancing U.S. dominance, the U.S. is perceived as a desirable ally, and the U.S. emphasis on liberal democratic values is perceived to “legitimate its exercise of hegemonic power.”¹⁵⁶ This new grand strategy of transformation is only possible because of what one scholar has noted as the aftereffect of a grand strategy of “preponderance,” or “a realist strategy that aims to perpetuate America’s post-Cold War geopolitical dominance - - hegemony.”¹⁵⁷ It is important to note that two of these qualifiers is dependent upon the perceptions of the international community - - and thus subject to change, despite what precedent has warranted thus far. Thus the success of strategic “transformation” may be necessarily limited by its initial successes, a point which Gaddis has noted. On the other hand, if U.S. interventions continue to be perceived as mutually beneficial for international

¹⁵⁴ Knight, Charles. “Essential Elements Missing in the National Security Strategy of 2002. Center for International Relations. Boston University. October 9, 2002. pg. 1

¹⁵⁵ Gaddis, John Lewis. “A Grand Strategy of Transformation.” *Foreign Policy*. Nov/Dec 2002. pg. 52

¹⁵⁶ Layne, Christopher. “Rethinking American Grand Strategy.” *World Policy Journal*. Summer 1998. Volume 15, Number Two. pg. 16

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.* pg. 11

security, then this might ensure that increases in U.S. dominance translate to increases in momentum for ushering in “transformation.”

Specifically, when Saddam Hussein’s regime is removed in the wake of American success in Afghanistan, the “psychological value of victory” is confirmed: “defeating an adversary sufficiently thoroughly that you shatter the confidence of others, so that they’ll roll over themselves before you have to roll over them.”¹⁵⁸ The final step in arriving at this grand strategy again returns to its goal of almost literally enforcing democratic enlargement: “What appears at first glance to be a lack of clarity about who’s deterrable and who’s not turns out, upon closer examination, to be a plan for transforming the entire Muslim Middle East: for bringing it, once and for all, into the modern world.”¹⁵⁹

Indeed, it may be the case that this willingness to adhere to transformation is indicative of a future alliance system where collective security is provided for “right-thinking, right-acting nations,” or, in other words, a *transformed* international community.¹⁶⁰ The backdrop for evaluating these assertions is still developing, however, and this may not prove to be accurate in the future.¹⁶¹ NSS has proven to be subject to change in the wake of unforeseeable events, and, given that transformation depends upon the assumption that an initial use of force will reap multiple successes, it may not remain tenable. It is important to note, though, that the current NSS aims to “make the world not just safer but better,” and, barring events that distance the NSS’s rhetoric from reality, this will most likely be the general direction of future foreign policy initiatives.

¹⁵⁸ Gaddis, John Lewis. “A Grand Strategy of Transformation.” *Foreign Policy*. Nov/Dec 2002. pg. 54

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* pg. 55

¹⁶⁰ Knight, Charles. “Essential Elements Missing in the National Security Strategy of 2002.” Center for International Relations. Boston University. October 9, 2002. pg. 6

¹⁶¹ Layne, for example, is skeptical that American hegemony will exist beyond the next decade. Indeed, Aaron Friedberg has noted in “In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America’s Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy” that strategy is often the “outcome of domestic political bargaining rather than strategic calculation by state decision makers,” though this claim is also debatable.

This study has focused on an evaluation of national security strategy since the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 mandated by law specific requirements for inclusion in these strategies. It has attempted to provide insight into the processes and institutions which affect the formulation of both NSS and longer term grand strategy. But it was necessarily limited to public, publishable versions of NSS. This may be, in fact, only half of the story: For every public version of NSS, there is *possibly* a private and classified version which could provide greater detail into the means and ends able to be employed and in the pursuit of NSS objectives.

Many scholars more knowledgeable than I of the internal processes and institutions that shape the drafting of national security strategy have provided general insights from which many assumptions in this study were made. I am especially thankful to Professor Albert Eldridge, Professor Peter Feaver, and scholar James Locher, Jr. Their guidance in directing my research in this project was critical and invaluable.

Indeed, some have suggested that the existence of the classified NSSR's is in question. Where possible, I have sought personal confirmation from those involved in passing GNA. Where necessary, I have depended upon informed speculation and inference. This suggests that a more comprehensive assessment of national security strategy could be provided by those who have access to usually restricted information or those who have had personal experience in formulating NSS. Given such access, the next logical step might be an assessment which more clearly defined the processes and institutions that shape strategymaking, or, as the case may be, the ways in which individuals integral to the strategymaking process in fact limit the influence of these processes and institutions. An analysis accounting for the role of supplementary national

strategies such as the Secretary of Defense's *Defense Planning Guidance* and more comprehensive studies such as the *Quadrennial Defense Review* might prove more telling of the national security strategymaking process.

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